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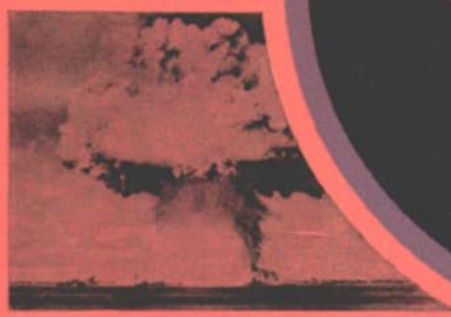

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Encounter

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Ignazio Silone

Re-Thinking Progress

I—The Sphinx of Affluence

SOME PEOPLE may find it strange that an author best known by his novels about life in depressed areas and poverty-stricken villages should now be concerned with the problems of economic and social security. In point of fact, my interest in this currently fashionable topic dates from long ago.

Critics who see me primarily as some kind of sociological or political writer, with all the limitations that such an assessment implies, have never been to my liking. For the one thing that has always truly interested me is the fate of man, his involvement in the complex machinery of the modern world, at whatever latitude or longitude. And naturally I feel myself to be everywhere on the side of man, not of the machinery. If the characters in my novels happen for the most part to be either poor peasants, or intellectuals and priests in a state of moral crisis, or political bureaucrats of conflicting persuasions, and if the background against which they move is that of a barren countryside, this is not due to any predilection on my part for a certain kind of local colour; it is simply that that is the kind of reality I know best, that I carry, so to speak, within myself—the context in which I can most clearly perceive, stripped to its barest essentials, the human predicament of our time.

And furthermore, are not poverty and wealth, after all, correlative terms? They are like heat and cold: it is impossible to have any clear conception of the one unless by comparison with the other. But perhaps it may help to explain my standpoint if I record some personal reminiscences of how, long ago, I first became interested in the problems of prosperity, and gradually, amidst the conflicting diatribes of the pundits, evolved an opinion of my own.

ALTHOUGH I WAS BORN and bred in a region of Italy that, while not backward—indeed if anything overburdened and exhausted by its load of mediaeval history—was nevertheless poverty-stricken, my experience of, and earliest reflections on, the situation of man in a rich and technologically advanced society date from the very outset of my life as a writer, and have continued to keep pace with it. I refer to the period about 1930, when I embarked on my long exile in the German-speaking cantons of Switzerland and began to write *Fontamara*.

It would be hard to imagine a more glaring contrast than that between the subject-matter of my first novel (the desperate poverty, the exploitation, and the revolt—or rather, awakening to a spirit of revolt—of peasants in a Southern Italian village) and the social conditions of the country in which I had sought refuge: a country universally recognised as among the most advanced in Europe, one where poverty, if not completely abolished, has at any rate long since been reduced to a very marginal problem.

I felt this contrast all the more keenly when in the company of certain Swiss friends with whom the divergent conditions of our respective homelands used to provide a recurring topic of discussion. Both socially and ideologically, these friends were a mixed bunch. They included architects, doctors, artisans, Protestant clergymen. Some were deeply committed to this or that ideology, while, to others, ideology of any kind was anathema. But common to all of them were certain typically Swiss qualities that usually escape the notice of the passing tourist, notably a distaste for eloquence and, in general,

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all those forms of idle talk that we Latins are so fond of. With a few of these friends I felt a special affinity deriving from the fact that they, like me, were just then in mourning for "the god that failed." In other words, they had hoped, as I did, that the Russian Revolution would lead to freedom, and had been disillusioned, as I had been. With certain others I shared, despite our having been born into different faiths, a somewhat iconoclastic habit of judging world events, the behaviour of the ruling classes, and in fact every aspect of politics, whether secular or ecclesiastical, by the yardstick of Christian ethics. The solidarity shown by my Swiss friends towards political exiles was a logical by-product of their natural aversion to dictatorships—which aversion, however, did not in the least inhibit them from criticising with the utmost frankness the faults of their own compatriots and their own political institutions.

So, DRIVEN BY homesickness, and by a passion for politics that could find no other outlet, I began to write *Fontamara*, that story of poor Southern Italian peasants in which I tried to recount the vicissitudes of the clash, at once tragic and grotesque, between their as yet semi-feudal mentality and the new forms of exploitation and tyranny to which they were being subjected. And even as I was struggling to get all this down on paper, I would hear my Swiss friends denouncing, with equal ferocity, the spiritual decline of their own country. Most of the fault lay, in their view, with the inhabitants of the richer cantons. These prosperous Swiss burghers, as my friends described them to me, were mentally obtuse, devoted to the pursuit of pleasure at its most vulgar and superficial, infatuated with the gimmicks of technology, and as a result of all this, reduced to a state of utter boredom. In support of their tirades, my friends would quote the latest statistics to prove the increasing number of divorces, suicides, children born deaf (this too, it seemed, being a sign of decadence); they would point to the spreading vogue of psycho-analysis in all classes of society, or the mediocre calibre of politicians. Nor did labour and the working class escape their share of criticism. In particular my friends reproached the cooperative movement and the big industrial unions for concentrating their efforts on the purely selfish fight for higher wages, while remaining openly indifferent to other problems of more general concern for the working class as a whole. So in all these discussions of ours we would invariably find ourselves up against the question whether this spiritual decay or stagnation that my friends complained of was really the result of increasing collective prosperity.

Was this same sad fate in store for any country that achieved a measure of affluence?

FOR ME TOO, the question was clearly one of far more than merely academic or passing interest. At the time, however, I could not allow it to distract me from what, both as a free Italian writer and a Southern European having some insight into the peculiar problems of his native region, I felt to be my duty. What meaning could all this have for people on the verge of starvation? I told myself that problems should be faced only according as they arose, and that it would be some time yet before the agricultural labourers of Southern Italy had to cope with the drawbacks of the affluent society.

This argument was no mere alibi for me; I was genuinely convinced of its validity, but at the same time I could see its flaws. There were limits to what could be achieved by political action; on that score I had no illusions. To work in politics for any motive other than the pursuit of personal power must surely, I think, demand a certain measure of self-deception, of deliberately closing one's eyes to certain aspects of the truth. How can anyone really believe that a change of régime will suffice to put everything right? Yet political action, on any level beyond that of mere personal ambition, must necessarily aim at shaping the future. The revolutionary lives in a state of perpetual expectation. And so the spectre-grey enigmas of the future began increasingly to haunt the pages of everything I wrote after *Fontamara*. In my second novel, *Bread and Wine*, one of the characters asks himself this question:

> "When we're no longer persecuted, shall we in our turn persecute others? And if ever the time comes when we can eat our fill every day, will there be nothing left for us to do but concentrate on our digestion?"

And so this insidious problem of the relationship between collective prosperity and personal ethics remained lodged in my conscience like some kind of woodworm. It was only one facet of the attempt I was then making to assess the potentialities of Marxism as a reconstructive

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force, and the contrast between the Russian and the Scandinavian experiments. It was already clear as daylight to me that, in the Janus of socialism, the brutal face of the Stalinist East was utterly repulsive; but what was one to make of that benign, optimistic smile on the other face? Wasn't it just a little bit too smug? A strict dividing-line would plainly have to be drawn between what was essential in socialism and what was merely accessory to it: a task all the more urgent because of the horrible way in which Fascism and Nazism were aping certain superficial aspects of socialism—as, for instance, in the corporative regimentation of workers, in certain kinds of social legislation, and in the mass organisation of working-class leisure.

A FEW YEARS PREVIOUSLY the Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset had already attempted, in his book *The Revolt of the Masses*, which has since become a classic, to clarify the ambiguities of the new situation. But what made his analysis unacceptable to many of us was the palpable fear underlying it, mingled with aristocratic disdain, at the prospect that the masses might participate in public life. Ortega's prejudice was not so much against the mass-man, about whom he in any case knew very little. What he bitterly denounced was the uncultivated man, "the mediocrity who knows himself to be a mediocrity, who has the effrontery to proclaim the rights of mediocrity and to enforce them whenever he chooses." We found Ortega's attitude all the more unacceptable in that the phenomenon requiring to be elucidated was in fact not the so-called "masses," which had existed both as a reality and as a concept from time immemorial: it was the phenomenon of "massification." And "massification" could no longer be studied from the outside, since the whole of society was saturated with it, and we ourselves were in it up to our necks.

We found the same hostility to new ideas, based however on a more radical historical vision, in the Italian historian Guglielmo Ferrero, himself at the time a political exile in Switzerland, where he lived, an isolated and haughty figure, almost as an exile among exiles. To Ferrero undoubtedly goes the credit (which Italians still persistently refuse to recognise) of having begun to criticise modern mass civilisation as early as the first decade of this century, in an era of widespread euphoria about the inevitability of Progress. One of his basic concepts was the difference between qualitative and quantitative civilisation. In his book *Between Two Worlds*, published in 1913, he developed this idea in the imaginary conversation of a group of passengers on a luxury liner returning from America to Europe. They began by talking of America, model and prototype of an industrialised society; from there they went on to discuss the whole future of industrial civilisation, and to analyse its inherent elements of dangerous instability. Ferrero defined industrial civilisation as quantitative, because its dynamic impulse lies in the uncontrolled and uncontrollable development of the techniques of production. Despite the increased prosperity that it brings to many people, he saw it as a civilisation without stable values, without any built-in system of checks and balances, and therefore fatally destined to end, of its own momentum, in disaster.

What my friends and I found least convincing in Ferrero's gloomy vision (which in retrospect, however, strikes one as having been much more realistic than Croce's optimism) was its blanket uniformity, and consequently the absence of any loophole or inconsistency that would admit of a different principle being voiced, let alone acted upon. We had reached a point of disillusionment at which many ideals in which we had formerly believed, foremost among them the myth of Progress, had lost all meaning for us, and we abandoned them without regret. But we still felt an instinctive revulsion against any concept that ruled out, *a priori*, the chance to resist or to rebel.

SINCE THEN THE WORLD has seen the industrialisation of new countries and the spread of mass communications extend and enforce social conditioning on a massive scale. At the same time, the shrill voices (as they used to seem to us) of a few lone Cassandras have given way to a vast and pessimistic chorus of sociologists, all brandishing tables of comparative statistics; and a mere act of faith in mankind will not suffice to counter their pessimism. This, I feel, is the most important issue facing us today, vitally important for any understanding of the age in which we live.

Until quite recently, the notion that prosperity, and even wealth and luxury, might cease to be the privilege of the few and, through the adoption of miraculous new sources of power such as nuclear energy, be guaranteed, with minimal effort, to increasing numbers of people, seemed a

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kind of fantasy from the realm of science fiction. Even today, many peoples of the world are still very far from reaching such a goal, still living in squalor and destitution. But at least we do know that prosperity for all has now come within the scope of what is possible, and furthermore that, historically speaking, it has come within the range of our short-term expectations (as has its opposite, the general catastrophe of a third world war, in which no one is any longer willing to believe). In other words, politics is now everywhere subordinate to the categorical imperative of prosperity—a fact which no political party can afford to ignore. Even the leaders of what is known as the Communist world, or at least those of them that have been converted to peaceful coexistence, never lose an opportunity nowadays of promising their peoples prosperity for all within the next ten years. "Write down in your notebooks," Khrushchev told Western journalists at the beginning of the Seven Year Plan, "that by 1970 the Soviet Union will have outstripped the United States." In his characteristically colourful style he declared to the workers of Budapest (3 April 1964): "We need a good plate of goulasch, we need schools, we need houses, we need the ballet. All these things help to make life better. . . ." Many people felt that from that moment onwards Russia was officially relinquishing (to the benefit of Mao's China) her rights of primogeniture as the leader-state of oppressed peoples. The plate of paprika stew took its place in the realm of symbols beside the Biblical mess of pottage. But in fact the bourgeois trend in both revolutionary and reformist socialism was already discernible long before.

Be that as it may, what concerns us now is the Soviet prediction, reiterated by Khrushchev's successors, that Russia will soon be on a par, both technologically and economically, with the most highly developed countries of the West. There can hardly now be anyone, anywhere in the world, who does not sincerely hope that they may fulfil their promise. If the near future could bring genuine prosperity to those countless millions that have endured so much and for so long, it would be a matter of rejoicing on our own behalf as well as on theirs. And a lot of spurious polemical issues could at last be dropped from the East-West slanging-match.

AND THEN WHAT? We know that prosperity, while solving a great many problems, brings new ones in its wake. But what are they?

It is hard for the layman to unravel them, since even the pundits cannot agree about the situation in those Western countries which were the first to experience prosperity. Most of these experts seem to be frankly pessimistic, and their pessimism cannot properly be discussed without some preliminary consideration of the evidence marshalled in support of it. It is now almost a commonplace to lament that guaranteed prosperity for all has lowered the spiritual tone of society, abolished the elements of risk, encouraged laziness and indolence. The description that the pessimists give of this process can be easily summarised. All those deplorable characteristics that so often render the *nouveau riche* an object of ridicule seem to be reproduced in nations, on a vastly magnified scale, once they attain economic well-being and security. It is as though prosperity served mainly to appease pent-up arrears of hunger for coarse and facile pleasures, as though vulgarity increased in direct proportion to income. The typical citizen of a well-fed nation is portrayed as a passive extrovert, bored and boring, constantly subjected to the pressure of artificial stimuli and unable to live without them. His memory, we are told, grows daily more feeble, and before long he becomes incapable of enduring solitude or of thinking for himself. He no longer has friends: he only has contacts. In the very age when philosophers have rediscovered the Hegelian concept of alienation, reality obligingly offers us the spectacle of human beings who have reached the last stages of personal alienation even though all their wants are satisfied.

Mechanical progress, we are told, has created machines that resemble men; and a parallel social evolution is now forging men that increasingly resemble machines. To this one might retort that conformist collective attitudes, fashions, social infatuations have existed in every phase of history. But nowadays, the pessimists argue, they are being mass-produced by industry, like any other object of everyday use. So much capital has been invested in the manufacture of consumer goods, from motor-cars to gramophone records, from tinned or packaged foods to ready-made clothing, that the finding of markets for them cannot be left to chance. The desires of consumers are therefore correspondingly aroused, guided, funnelled to the specific product. The affluent society tends, at every level, to be run by a class of anonymous, well-

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paid, disciplined, efficient and docile bureaucrats.

This picture recalls the caricature that, up to a few decades ago, bourgeois-liberal writers used to draw of the socialist society of the future. Medical statistics, they prophesied, would show boredom to be responsible for more deaths than tuberculosis. If this pessimistic vision were accurate, one would be obliged to conclude that the affluent society of highly industrialised countries is moving towards a type of social order that will have all the drawbacks of socialism without any of its hoped-for advantages.

TO WHATEVER EXTENT this kind of analysis may be valid, one cannot accept it unreservedly. Personally I always feel an instinctive distrust when confronted with one of those sweeping assessments, inevitably culminating in a moral judgment, that someone has evolved from a statistical table in which hundreds or thousands of individual cases, superficially homogeneous but basically unrelated, have been lumped together under a single heading. All too often the interpretation of statistical data will prove to have been highly coloured by some ideological preference, and any one fact can serve the pundits as a starting-point from which to proceed towards diametrically opposite conclusions.

Of course I myself can hardly hope to avoid these pitfalls, even though, as I have tried to explain, my interest in the question is wholly unacademic. It was simply that, after my final break with active politics, I felt the need of beginning all over again my apprenticeship in the realities of human society. I have to admit that it has taken me a very long time; but at least I think I can say that this slowness on my part was not due to any motive of personal convenience. Like every writer who envisages the task of writing as service to his fellow-men. I simply felt, both personally and on behalf of my readers, the need and urge to understand. At no stage have I felt tempted to produce any monolithic or final judgment about a reality that is so plainly contradictory and fluid. My modest contribution to the understanding of contemporary society is consequently restricted to the part of it that I know best; and I don't mean this only in a geographical sense. The same effort at understanding has constituted, I think, the underlying purpose of both my essays and my novels: the form may differ, but the same basic theme is common to them all.

II—The Pitfalls of Welfare

THE FIRST HURDLE in understanding the changes that have occurred in contemporary society is a certain ambiguity of nomenclature. Even authoritative writers sometimes get confused when it comes to sorting out certain basic concepts such as the affluent society, mass civilisation, and the various forms of State assistance for the needy or under-privileged. One often finds these terms (especially the term "welfare state") being used interchangeably or indiscriminately, even though the concepts they denote are both intrinsically and historically different, and require to be defined in appropriately differentiated terms, even where they co-exist or overlap. In the present state of semantic muddle one gets the feeling that the idiom of even the most modern languages is not keeping pace with contemporary social phenomena.

The ideology prevailing in Christian countries had always excluded the notion of prosperity for all. Economic inequality, both of individuals and of classes, was regarded, even by the poor, not as a phase of history but as part of the natural order of things. Every age had its share of Utopian dreamers, but their prophecies were invariably dismissed with the argument that to abolish poverty would upset the whole divinely established order of the universe, as confirmed even by Christ when he sat at meat in the house of Simon the leper, in Bethany. His words, if taken literally, did indeed lend themselves to this misunderstanding. When Mary Magdalene poured the ointment of spikenard on his head, and "some that had indignation within themselves" complained of the waste, saying "it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor," Jesus rebuked them, saying: "Ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always." But one need only interpret the term "poor" as meaning "despised or rejected" (for hunger can ultimately be abolished, but not unhappiness) to restore to Christ's words their permanent validity: the priority of love ("me ye have not always") over compassion. There will always be time to pity the unfortunate, but for loving there is no time to be lost. All real love is inevitably tinged with a tragic sense of precariousness.

The narrower (and now disputed) exegesis of that Gospel episode was consistent, however,

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with the function of mediator traditionally held by the Church from feudal until recent times. The Church exhorted the poor to accept their fate with resignation, and the rich to perform the seven works of mercy listed in the catechism: "to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to give shelter to pilgrims, to visit the sick, to visit the imprisoned, to bury the dead." And so, until the advent of the modern democratic state, almost all forms of relief or charitable activity remained, in Christian countries, a prerogative of the Church. In every age there arose great religious orders pledged to voluntary service in hospitals, orphanages, soup kitchens, and in homes for the indigent, the infirm, the disabled. Civil authorities rarely concerned themselves with such matters until the growth of democracy in the modern state began to require, as one of its consequences, that society as a whole should assume responsibility for these tasks, irrespective of religious differences. This new spirit of secular aid (notably exemplified in the International Red Cross) has attained, in less than a century, a remarkable record of achievement. Its culminating point now appears, given certain favourable circumstances, to be the welfare state, in which economic aid and social security are complementary to each other. But here the terminological confusion begins.

In its most advanced and complete form, the welfare state presupposes a highly developed society, with widespread economic well-being, and it is basically characterised by an economic policy of full employment and by a very extensive system of social insurance that accompanies the individual citizen, as the saying goes, from womb to tomb. On the whole, this is the type of government at present existing in the Scandinavian countries, Great Britain, Holland, Luxembourg, Western Germany, Switzerland, and Israel. To this group some would add the countries of the East European bloc, in view of the fact that totalitarian control of their national economy ensures full employment of their manpower; but even their own political leaders admit that the actual standard of living beyond the Iron Curtain is still very far removed from affluence.

In countries whose economic development does not yet allow full employment or high wages, the most usual method by which the State acquits itself of the new obligations inseparable from power consists in some form of economic aid, not to be confused with what once upon a time used to be called charity. It is not a question of giving alms, but of discharging a duty. To distinguish it from the welfare state as such, I shall call this the "social aid State." This kind of State is currently to be found at every level of development: in countries like Italy that have already almost reached the threshold of economic and social security, as in the so-called 'new" countries that have only recently emerged from colonial status. In other words, the task of helping those sectors of the population unable to provide for their own basic needs (the unemployed, the disabled and infirm, the sick, the old, and also the victims of great natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes and so on) is now an organic part of the function of the State.

This new trend in the nature of political power may be variously interpreted, according to personal preference, as an extension of the Christian ethic of charity, or of the socialist ethic of social responsibility, or even simply as a prudent expedient for the maintenance of law and order. One thing, however, is certain: the very fact that this trend has become so widespread shows how widely felt was the need for it. Like most other phenomena of contemporary society, it began, or at any rate became generally accepted, during the First World War, with the relief measures then adopted for the benefit of the civilian population, especially for the families of men who were at the front, or had been killed in action; and it grew rapidly during the immediate postwar years of economic and political crisis. Since then the State has constantly had to intervene in order to remedy the more dangerous discrepancies arising out of the unequal distribution of wealth, and to keep the most underprivileged classes of the population at a safe distance from despair and revolt. The period between the two wars also witnessed the growth of certain forms of welfare promoted by industrial firms (*e.g.*, Ford, Bata, Philips, Olivetti), which later came to be classified among the characteristic features of neo-capitalism.

Rich countries can obviously afford to spend more than others on their social services, although wherever wealth is sufficiently well-distributed and society still sufficiently healthy

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and dynamic, it is not always necessary to have recourse to the State. Where government intervention becomes vital is in the developing countries, as soon as they get caught up in the problems of modern life—that is to say, as soon as the masses begin to emerge from their age-old lethargy and in one way or another have got to be kept quiet. This happens, be it said, no matter what the prevailing ideology. It would be mistaken to suppose that the trend to State aid is now peculiar to democratic governments, since it is also to be found in dictatorships, if nothing else as a kind of demagogic compensation for the deprivation of freedom. The basic difference between modern dictatorships and the conservative-absolutist régimes of the past lies precisely in the fact that nowadays even dictatorships are in some respects forced to ape socialism. There is nothing new in this paradox. Social services were far more extensive in Sparta than in Athens. And the three notorious *F*'s on which the Bourbon kings of Naples based their art of government (*"Feste, Farina, Forche," i.e.*, festivities, flour, and gibbets) can also be included among the many forerunners of the social-aid State.

At all events, these last decades have increasingly seen governments the world over coming to regard public welfare services as an integral part of the activities of the State. The State is no longer, as it still was at the beginning of this century, concerned merely with maintaining law and order. Today no political party, whatever its economic policy, can close its eyes to the problem of poverty. One need only reflect that the most highly developed system of public health services as yet seen in Europe, that of Great Britain, was the brain-child of a Liberal, Lord Beveridge (1942). After the war, in 1948, the Labour Government made legal provision that any citizen not receiving a wage or pension adequate to guarantee him or her a certain basic minimum of food, clothing, and shelter was entitled to a subsidy. This law was of benefit mainly to old people, until then an almost entirely neglected category. The principle of a guaranteed subsistence minimum is now accepted by all parties in England, and the only questions hinge on the exact figure of the subsidy and of the insurance contributions.

Nor does it matter, surely, if some accept the "social aid State" to salve their consciences, or as a lesser evil, while others accept it in a spirit of philanthropy; the significant thing is that, even within the framework of the traditional social order, economic assistance in one form or another is now recognised to be indispensable. But if everyone agrees, or anyhow pretends to agree, on this point, why does there seem to be such growing dissatisfaction with public welfare schemes?

The explanation, I think, lies in the method, or lack of method, by which these welfare schemes are generally carried out. No one now disputes the principle of social solidarity, but few people are satisfied by the manner of its application in practice. To begin with, its cost is far greater than would reasonably seem necessary. Expenditure on social welfare has rocketed out of all proportion to its results. In Italy the social security and health insurance dues paid by the public are equivalent to approximately half the total revenue of the State. No one controls, no one could possibly control, the vast new army of officials required to run these services; they seem more inclined to favouritism and corruption than civil servants of the old school—a fact which, it must be admitted, some members of the public are quick to take advantage of. Rich or poor, the citizen benefiting from welfare services is prone to become arrogant and irresponsible. Many people see nothing dishonest in stealing from the State; they feel it's like stealing from a thief. An old Italian proverb, still frequently quoted, says "Government money is the Devil's flour."

Not least among the disasters that have befallen us in the last few decades, at least in Italy, must be reckoned, it seems to me, the widespread corruption that bureaucratic paternalism has fostered in vast sectors of the population. I have heard it said that the phenomenon is a frequent one in countries where democracy is of recent growth. Corruption finds fertile soil in the atavistic grudge that the underprivileged classes bear against everything connected with the State, indeed against everything whatsoever of a public nature. For too long, the State behaved as an enemy; from the moment it becomes dependent on public opinion, the under-privileged classes feel that at last they have a chance of getting their own back. One wonders how long this state of affairs is likely to last. The rot has even got into the framework of democratic political parties and organisations, into their trade unions and

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co-operatives, and it remains engrained even after the formerly under-privileged have become relatively prosperous. If one did not happen to be familiar with the kind of situation in which this sort of corruption is rampant, or if one had not devoted much thought to it, one might simply ascribe it to poverty plus lack of education in democratic citizenship. Personally, however, I believe that these factors are inadequate to explain the present degeneration of civic virtue in circumstances of a kind that, both economically and culturally, are considerably less precarious than half a century ago.

SOME OF MY BOYHOOD MEMORIES are linked to a mutual benefit society that used to exist in my little native town. Although it had been started without any kind of official support, its financial situation was always flourishing, not only because it had a large membership, consisting mostly of farmers and artisans, and used constantly to organise entertainments and social functions to which members could bring their families, but also and above all because, when it actually came to handing out money, even in clear cases of urgent need, the society would encounter all sorts of obstacles. Chief of these, as I learned from my elders, was a peculiar kind of pride or shame that prevented many members who had been stricken, and sometimes ruined, by long periods of illness or other misfortunes, from asking for the help to which they were entitled. I can still remember listening to a discussion among the members of the executive committee as to how this stubborn shyness of the needy might be tactfully overcome. I noticed exactly the same behaviour after the earthquake of 1915 that ravaged my native district of the Marsica. A few days later we began to see teams of relief workers arriving from other parts of Italy. We were deeply moved, of course, we were grateful, but we were also astounded by this entirely new, unforeseen and unforeseeable development, since the tradition handed down to us by our fathers was that, whatever catastrophe might befall, the survivors should bury their dead and manage, by themselves, as best they could. There was nothing exceptional in such an attitude at that time, and it was certainly not peculiar to my native town. Political parties were still unheard of. We had a county hospital, but it was nearly always empty. Except in cases requiring major surgery, when the doctor refused to operate in the patient's home, people were ashamed to bring their sick relatives to the hospital, even if hygienic conditions at home left much to be desired. To shirk the duty of caring for an invalid by consigning him or her to the hospital would have been looked on as a disgrace.

THERE IS, OF COURSE, no reason to mourn the passing of such traditions. There is nothing shameful in taking advantage, when necessary, of insurance schemes or loan societies. Meanwhile, in my native district as elsewhere, living conditions have improved. Spending, even on luxuries, has increased; more people are now getting some kind of education, more books and newspapers are read; conflicting political passions ride high. Nevertheless the scramble for subsidies goes on there now quite as fiercely as anywhere else. In fact both the parish priest and the local representatives of the various political parties seem to spend most of their time writing letters of recommendation and helping to fill up application forms for subsidies of one kind or another. A bronchial cold is enough to send people rushing to the hospital; beds there are in such demand that it is very hard to get in. And if a heavy shower should leave a puddle in front of someone's doorstep, it will rarely occur to him to fetch a shovel and clean it up in a couple of minutes, as his father would have done; instead, he lodges a protest at the town hall, or writes a letter to his representative in Parliament.

NO ADEQUATE study has as yet been made of the role now played by government subsidies in the ideology of the social aid State, or of their psychological effect on the beneficiaries. To me it seems a new form of madness. One utterly lunatic episode, memorable chiefly because it surpassed all others in its crudeness, was that of the *"false marocchinate."*

It happened towards the end of the last war, in the spring of 1944, when detachments of Moroccan troops belonging to the French Army arrived in certain villages of the district known as Ciociaria, not very far south of Rome. All the women in these villages, with the exception of those who managed to get away in time and take refuge in the hills, were—to use the phrase coined on that occasion—"moroccanised." The Moroccan troops raped them all, without dis-

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tinction of age, from little girls of ten to old women of seventy.[1]

All the Italian Government could do for the unfortunate "moroccanised" women was to give them a little financial compensation. Since rape is hardly the kind of experience that a woman would normally feel inclined to boast about, it might reasonably have been expected that some of them would prefer to forgo the money rather than admit to their misfortune. And no doubt that is precisely what some of them did. But local officials were more than a little astonished to find that the reverse was also happening. They found themselves on all sides inundated with bogus applications from women claiming the wretched pittance allotted to the victims of the Moroccan troops, even though everyone knew that these particular women had had the luck, at the time of the outrage, to be elsewhere, at a safe distance from the scene.

This somewhat novel attempt to swindle the government provoked a few stray comments in the newspapers; then, whether from a mistaken conception of patriotism or a demagogic reluctance to dwell on an episode so unflattering to the poorer classes, the scandal was hushed up. I find it peculiarly disheartening that supposedly Leftist politicians and journalists, while rhetorically claiming to have placed their hopes of social renewal in the common man, should in fact remain totally indifferent to such depraved forms of scrounging. At all events, the episode of the pseudo-"moroccanised" women deserves a place in the annals of government aid as an extreme example of a pathological phenomenon that would repay further study. One is at a total loss to explain how, in a region of Italy where so-called "crimes of honour" are still frequent, women who were wives and mothers could go to the length of inventing a barefaced lie about having been raped, and furthermore induce their relatives to perjure themselves in support of this bogus claim. The usual excuse of poverty cannot be pleaded in this case, at any rate not as an immediate or conscious incentive, since the coveted grant was so very small (about five or six thousand lire) that the profit would undoubtedly have been swallowed up by lawyers' fees and all the other legal formalities that pressing the claim would have entailed. In other circumstances, moreover, these very same women would readily have sacrificed much larger sums of money to defend their reputations. Personally I am convinced that the only plausible explanation is to be found in the new type of relationship that has come to exist between the social aid State and its citizens, as a result of which many of them lose their heads completely the moment they hear the words "government grant," irrespective of the amount of money involved and of the qualifications required, or the purpose for which it is intended.

NOWADAYS WE ARE SPARED the sight of ragged paupers waiting for soup to be distributed at the monastery gates; but those little groups of petitioners one sees being shepherded by lawyers or party officials through the corridors of public offices are hardly a more edifying spectacle. No one would receive them, not even the lowest-grade petty clerk, if they were to venture there unaccompanied. In any case they could hardly find their way around in the labyrinth of red tape without some protection or guidance; not to mention the fact that they sometimes want this protection in order to obtain, not a right but a privilege, or perhaps even an infringement of the law.

Every political party, in Italy at least, now imitates the State by having a central relief and social guidance office, linked up with a network of provincial and county branches, as an integral part of its structure. The more enterprising members of Parliament have one duly trained secretary to deal exclusively with questions of social assistance, the card-index of those receiving benefits or favours being the vote-getting basis of all election campaigns.

Only the leaders, it would seem, can afford to despise such tactics. But they have to shoulder other and more onerous tasks, on a collective scale, as when, for instance, relief must be provided for a whole sector of the population stricken by some natural catastrophe. In Italy such catastrophes are unfortunately frequent. And it must be admitted that, due partly to the general improvement in

[1] While speaking of North Africans, I would like to add a remark on the subject of colonialism. In those same days of 1944, General Juin, Commander-in-Chief of the French Expeditionary Force in Italy, had an audience with the Pope. The Holy Father had a number of complaints to make to the General, one of them being the fact that nothing was done to punish the troops guilty of having wreaked such havoc among these poor women. The General explained that North African soldiers could not be punished because the French military code allowed coloured troops the right to rape and plunder when invading enemy territory.

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living conditions, the organisation of relief, both public and private, is now increasingly speedy and effective. But even these tragic occasions have their ignominious aspects. All too often, the methods of providing relief are such as to foster a "professional victim" mentality among the survivors.

RECENT TESTIMONY to this deplorable state of affairs was furnished by the socialist mayor of a small town that was flooded and razed to the ground when the dam of an artificial lake suddenly gave way. Most of the inhabitants lost their lives. For those who survived, relief funds came pouring in swiftly and abundantly from every other province of Italy. So what did the socialist mayor have to complain about? He complained that the methods by which these funds were distributed were utterly mistaken. The survivors, instead of being helped to get back to normal and make a new start, were dealt with in the most summary fashion, by being simply handed large sums of cash, far larger than anything they had ever been accustomed to. Such trust was misplaced, for they straightaway plunged into orgies of spending and carousing, thus bearing out the old saying "easy come, easy go."

"The result," said the mayor, "is that in one of the factories many of the workers, now that their pockets are full of money, have walked out of their jobs. They spend their days in idleness, sitting around for hours on end in one or the other of the numerous bars that, since the disaster, have sprung up like mushrooms; or else they wander here and there trying to collect further subsidies; and meanwhile the factory is at a standstill."

As it happened, the protagonists of this episode were not backward peasants of the under-privileged South, but skilled industrial workers of Longarone, in the northern province of Belluno, reputedly one of the most modern and progressive in the Peninsula. In my view no region of Italy and no category of its population is at present uncontaminated by this lamentable degeneration of the sense of citizenship.

In fact, only a little while before the disaster of Longarone, and in almost identical circumstances, the peasants of another region, when it was flooded by the waters of the Po, behaved in identical fashion. As the level of the floodwaters continued to rise, teams of relief workers rushed from neighbouring provinces—firemen, carpenters, bricklayers, under the supervision of engineers and technicians. On the stronger of the two banks of the river, at a safe distance from the flood, the women bivouacked with their children amid piles of salvaged furniture and household effects of every description, while the husbands and grown-up sons sat around café tables in the *piazza*. Why couldn't they too have pitched in, taken some part in the rescue work? Why didn't they lend a hand in reinforcing the danger-points of the embankments, or evacuating the farmhouses threatened by the flood? The answer is that, since they were natives of the place and in one way or another interested parties, no one would have paid them. But they rushed to the town hall the moment word got around that clothes and blankets were going to be handed out free.

THE MOST DISTRESSING aspect of this decadence, in my view, is not so much the loss of all spontaneous generosity, nor the continual and arrogant claiming of what is due, as the miserable pettiness of such claims. The fact that rights imply duties as their counterpart being beyond the comprehension of these unfortunate people, they remain unaware of, or indifferent to, the greatest possible right they could claim, the right to be respected as men and to conduct themselves as men, the right to be citizens and not herded cattle; instead, they will fight tooth and nail to establish their right to hand-outs, gift-parcels, free entertainments.

The opinion I once held, namely, that social welfare could be made to work better if it were taken out of the hands of the bureaucrats and entrusted to the responsibility of those directly concerned, has been badly shaken by seeing people reduced to the plight I have just described. It is of course far easier to get away with swindling a public office than to deceive one's own workmates. But how to ensure that those elected to responsibility would really be the most honest? And how long would their honesty resist the pressures and petitions of their relatives, friends, and Party comrades?

(A concluding section will be published next month.)

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Freya Stark

Lunch with Homer

THE CYCLADES lie crumpled and easy on the glass of the Aegean, scoured by empty defiles that produce no more than some fever-spurt of torrents in the spring. Almost treeless, but seamed like skeleton leaves with goat-walls long since built to save forgotten vineyards, their paths are thinly scratched, their harvests fleeting and uncertain as a smile, and Time has fingered every disintegrating precipice and furrow. From any high point of vantage, the little waves that skim the noonday water show their triangular shapes and useless hurry as they trip under the *melteme* towards the shores; and the deep implacable blue is fringed with a gossamer wreath of air, a white illusion, round all the island bases.

The sun transforms these islands as he sinks. The air turns from white to azure like an opening hyacinth along the horizon, enveloping them in its invisible curves. Their dryness and hardness and all their detail disappears, and their villages shine for a moment until they too are smoothed into the tideless evening, while the sun's last slabs of gold flatten the sea. The *melteme* dies soon after noon and the waters' lucid edge now scarce turns over to write its hieroglyphs along the beaches; and only the high island outlines, free as it were of their pedestals, are left to flash like a shoal of fishes in the last of the sun.

Their fierce history is sunk below in shadows more opaque than those of the gathering night, and the tourists are safe in their lodgings along the small bits of boulevarded shore; and in the upper villages the lights that are friendly with darkness, the oil-lamp and cooking fire, still appear to gather rather than to pierce the twilight, as they have done through the long wildernesses of their past. With his day behind him, the fisherman or muleteer sits on the white-washed wall of his village and looks out over headlands, diminishing one beyond the other till shadows fold them in a last Orphic embrace in which they die.

THIS VISITATION OF BEAUTY, this daily miracle as regular as the light and shade of their toil or the water in the clefts of their rocks, perhaps gives to the islanders their cool transparent gaze. Their life has moulded them, through an austere and kindly village childhood and the poverty of youth and rub of middle years, till in their old age one sees them rugged and sifted down, like eagles grown gentle, with the sunlight of their days still in their eyes. Their age is respected, for it is no small acquisition out of the rigour of their labour, and an old man can sit on his doorstep or even on a chair and command any young one around to offer whatever delicacy is in season, figs or grapes or apricots, to the wayfarer on his hill; and with his bleached clothes and stubbly chin and hands furrowed and ridged and sunburnt like the rocks around him, can look every day into the ineffable face of Beauty, which has been with him so long that it is now inside him, and he does not even know that it is there.

I KEEP ONE SUCH ISLAND in mind and withhold its name because I like to think of it as private. When I left it last year nothing could run on wheels there although a boulevard is now threatened along its sandy shore; even then, at its southern end, a few miles of road, dusty under bus or lorries, connected its small harbour with the village capital, scooped out of rocks under the highest hill. This is now called St Elias, but once belonged to Helios the sun-god, and his chariot still seems nearer than most things as it travels over the solitude of wind-flattened stones and thyme. One can ride on a mule along the backbone of the island, four hours or so under Elias' shoulder, to the northern end, where no roads, except for mules, exist.

There is nothing here except a small square hotel, a smaller church, a handful of houses on a whitewashed street, and three white villages that

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look down from their landscape above. A quay with a windmill out of action—now left to satisfy the tourists—shelters five fishing *caiques*, whose subdued creaking or rubbing against each other, or sudden slapping like wet sheets in a wind, spreads news of the *melteme* through the night. There was a time when the *caiques* would creep out with the first breeze as silent as the dawn, but they all now have second-hand engines which make as much noise as the *Dies Irae* in a requiem and spur the laziest tourist to step on to the balcony of his room and look at the sunrise: when this is over and the boats are off, he can sleep again through the peace of the morning.

In 1687, Mr. Bernard Randolph reports this island as having been

> formerly very well inhabited, having two towns and ten villages, but in the last Warr betwixt the Venetians and Turks it is much dispeopled ... and the Privateers are so continually plaguing them, that Poor Souls, they have not sufficient to pay their tribute.... To the South is a high mountain, on which there is a sentinel to give notice, if they see any ships coming from the North or South, and they are soon out upon their backs.[1]

The Italians and the Renaissance persisted in the Cyclades long after the Crusades were over, and there was a court at Naxos, with intrigues and festivals that flashed in and out among the poverties of the islands: but the memory has come down thin and pastoral, a hard survival amid rocky hillsides and the thorny, scented thyme. The place is remembered where a shepherd lad was seized by the Turks and killed while he played his flute to warn his village; a great boulder marks the spot; and white shrines or monasteries plastered almost windowless against unscalable cliff faces still carry their tightrope atmosphere of safety and danger. But these voices have become small and dry, dusted over by a century or more of everyday toil that a man can deal with and put the unexpected out of mind. The origins of memory are anyway out of reach.

On the 15th of August our roadstead and its three villages celebrate their *Panagiya* in the hills. The Turkish raiders once destroyed a church there, and the ikon of Our Lady, hidden at the time among the rocks, had been lost and forgotten. Generations later it was found and brought to the nearest village, but escaped by night to its own solitude; and when this had happened several times, the villagers decided to rebuild the vanished church, and mark its feast with an annual pilgrimage, and so they do. Mass is celebrated, and a meal offered to all who come, and the mules climb up or down, one hour or two according to their stabling, carrying pilgrims on hard wooden saddles knotted with cords. The church stands alone among its uplands, where stone is so crowded that even the optimism of the islanders has ceased to hope for a harvest and the thyme has its freedom and looks as if it were the rock itself in flower.

The village streets, where the mules set out, are spotless with whitewash, whose bold fancies decorate every interval of pavement not occupied by steps; its yearly coating over the houses makes them look soft as milk, and whiteness is everywhere, except for little mounds of natural manure which these animals seem to deposit with astonishing frequency: some old woman runs swiftly with a dustpan to collect it for her garden strip that hangs above the cliffs. The mules, with the village girls bunched on top of them gaily dressed and clutching plastic bags, fill the narrow shallow street from side to side. They take the steps mincingly sideways, or trot down them at the same expert angle to the anguish of unpractised visitors. When they leave the village and reach steeper places, they droop their heads and relax their ears and, pondering between the trickles of loose stones, infallibly choose the easier before their muleteer comes up to whack them and say "Hah": and no one who has much to do with them can doubt that they are thinkers, concentrating on their own affairs with that misleading look of philosophic abstraction which is apt to deceive us all.

They halt and move and halt, in a zig-zag line in the sun, high above steps, and trees, and terraces of wheat or vines, to where the church stands in a dip of the hills, white and turquoise with a silvery dome, and a Greek flag running up its pole, and strings of small coloured triangles everywhere. One Mass is nearly over, and those who have been earlier or go in later are sitting under an awning of sacking where seats and chairs have made a café and *ouzo* is offered here and there. The morning goes easily; the little clanking bell which is merely a strip of metal sounds crazily cheerful at intervals, and

[1] *The Present State of the Islands in the Archipelago* (Oxford, 1687).

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Time—that precious commodity so stupidly wasted—lies sunning itself in its Mediterranean cradle as if it were a panther asleep upon the rocks.

I WANDER about and discover a few wizened olive trees near by where a skinned sheep is hanging; two young men are scraping it clean; thirty are to be done, they tell me, their arms red to the elbow, delighted to pause in their task. Over a thousand people are to be fed, and the sheep are cooked, as soon as they are ready, in a copper cauldron on an open fire near the trestles where luncheon will be eaten under a canopy of leaves. What a thing it is to be on holiday! Anyone might think it distasteful to deal with thirty skinned sheep in a morning, but the young men are beaming cheerfulness and out for enjoyment. Round the great cauldron, the buxom girls stir in a swarm; Mass is over; and the Papas—a rugged twinkling old man in a frayed black cassock—is out for an interval of gossip; the crowd grows every minute and the long line of mules can be seen winding towards us from far over the hills. Brown earthenware bowls and forks and spoons begin to be laid along the trestle tables, and the first batch is soon let into the enclosure while the rest of us continue with our *ouzos*, or coffees, or sweet paste called *submarine* which the Greeks like to suck with a tumbler of water.

In a strange way it all seems familiar. Where have we lunched like this before? In the Odyssey of course. In Pylos with Nestor and in other places. Prayers and food, landscape so hard as to be almost unchangeable, and holidays in the sun—they slip hardly interrupted through the comings and goings of religions and invasions.

The ox on broad earth then laid laterally
They held, while duke Pisistratus the throat
Dissolv'd, and set the sable blood afloat,
And then the life the bones left. Instantly
They cut him up; apart ran either thigh,
That with the fat they dubb'd, with art alone,
The throat-brisk, and the sweetbread pricking on.
Then Nestor broiled them on the coal-turned wood,
Poured black wine on; and by him young men stood,
That spits fine-pointed held, on which, when burned
The solid thighs were, they transfix'd and turn'd
The inwards, cut in cantles; which, the meat
Vowed to the Gods consum'd, they roast and eat.[3]

[3] *The Odyssey*, Book III (Chapman's translation).

The crazy bell pronounced the last Mass over and a steady stream now waited in a queue for their meal. The island's young policeman came to take us in directly as honoured guests to a side-table, while the feast stretched in two long rows of seated eating figures, dappled in sun and shadow under the canopy of leaves. The thirty sheep had been slaughtered close by and the huge copper cauldron's embers were still smouldering below it; and a sweet sticky smell of blood which the Gods so much enjoyed very nearly overcame a mortal like myself—and a degenerate one at that, for no one else seemed to mind. The broth steamed richly up with the "inwards" inside it; and whatever it was that Nestor had cut up for his guests followed in a second brown earthenware bowl, stewed with potatoes, which are a luxury of the islands.

The village girls carried round amphorae of *rezina*, poured with a classic gesture from the crook of the arm—that, too, how long remembered! And when the meal was ended, large trays came to collect what contributions everyone could afford. The island feast, so gay in its solitude, was over for the year, though there would still be village dancing in the evening.

THE AFTERNOON was already turning to those apricot colours that show the end of daylight on the rocks, and the mules were taking their charges briskly homeward, their muleteer swinging some leg-of-mutton uncooked and left over as he strode behind them. I made my way over the smooth worn stones that look so easy and are so deceitful, and thought of this accumulated memory which goes back farther than the single memories of men. By its help we are lifted like children on the shoulders of the ages, to think ourselves wiser than our forbears and look on landscapes which they never saw, and we think of this background as a shackle, as indeed it is often allowed to be. Yet I have seen too many of the slow-built harmonies broken by alien invasion, peaceful or otherwise, and whatever the eventual result may be, a period of great anguish and weakness must ever mark the change. Those are fortunate whose luck or wisdom, or mere geographic circumstance, keep their new values in the same general direction as the old, remembered or forgotten. A man needs his strength as he lunges into his future like a boxer in the ring; and the punch of it is not in his fist alone, but in the whole body of his past that makes him what he is.

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Jeremy Robson

Back

Back down that street
avoiding the cracks in paving stones
vaulting high walls
ringing door bells
running
summoning hidden heroes
from behind trees, from behind hills,
D'Artagnan, Cassidy. . . .

Back on that station
counting ten-second ultimatums
to expected trains:
not here in ten seconds
I'll jump, I'll scream.
Ten, nine, eight. . . .

That high-domed room again
caught by the cracked prayers
of the shawled, swaying men
We pledge this
Deliver us from that
Bring us peace Bring us rain
Hasten our Return

Back, smug conqueror, to that school,
that nightmare, jam-jar world,
now fictionalised, removed.
Same odours, sickening smells,
same names, desks, corridors,
same fears and rituals
Let us pray
Let us recall those colleagues
Who gave their young lives
Same men, same masters, searching,
reaching back: Your name?"
"Were you here in. . . ."
Ten years. Now back, unknown,
unrecognised abstraction.
Let us recall. . . .

Tight-packed, queuing ghosts,
ten, nine, eight,
dust to dust,
gone, returned, pressing the nerves,
waiting the counting, the reckoning,
the long-knived, jackboot nights.

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Louis J. Halle

Lessons of the Nuclear Age

FOR CENTURIES, up to 17 July 1945, the power of weapons had been increasing at an exponential rate. That morning at 5.30, however, it took a quantum jump. The device that was exploded at Alamogordo, New Mexico, had two thousand times the blast-power of the largest bomb ever before used in the history of warfare. One despairs of recapturing for a new generation the awe and the terror we felt at the time before an event that seemed to spell the doom of mankind.

Barring a few insiders, all any of us knew at first about this monstrous device was that it could destroy a city in a flash. As far as we knew, any garage-mechanic would now be able to manufacture it in his own cellar, any maniac could carry it in his vest-pocket. What defence could civilisation have against such a weapon?

Even when the nightmare of the home-made vest-pocket device had been dissipated, the potentialities of the real bomb, as reported by the scientists who had invented it, were such as to lead to the conclusion that this was not a weapon mankind could live with. If it were not abolished or somehow proscribed as a weapon in national armaments, while there was still time, mankind had little chance of an acceptable future.

The eminent physicist, Dr. Edward U. Condon (then Director of the National Bureau of Standards in Washington) told us:

> "In the insecurity of a world of national atomic armaments, every bit of metal carried by every incoming foreign traveller will have to be inspected in a laborious and sophisticated way.... The beginning of a new war will surely involve not only the launching of the missiles, but the explosion of the mines that have been secretly set near key targets..."[1]

This warning represented the authoritative opinion of the day. Nevertheless, twenty-two years later we see that it was wrong. Today we do live in a world of "national atomic armaments," and the bomb has become thousands of times more powerful, and we have had quite a few new wars. Happily, however, the consequences Dr. Condon foresaw have not been realised.

THE IMPLICATION OF PREDICTIONS like this, which were altogether plausible in 1946, was that abolition or control of the bomb required the nations of the world to give up some part of their sovereignty forthwith, and to submit themselves to a world government that would police mankind, prevent any further wars, and hold a monopoly of atomic energy to be used for peaceful purposes only. An approach to this objective, at least, was what lay behind the Baruch Report to the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission in 1946—this, rather than a Machiavellian plot (as some alleged) to steal a march on Stalin and get the Cold War started.

Today we can be sure of one thing. The problem, from the beginning, was not that of abolishing or uninventing nuclear weapons. It was, rather, that of learning to live with them—as it still is. Our initial impulse to get rid of them is understandable in terms of the logic that then possessed our minds, and it follows a consistent pattern of precedents in the history of weapons-technology. When the rules and limits of chivalric warfare were threatened by the advent of the cross-bow, which dealt death at a distance and anonymously, the Second Lateran Council in 1159 prohibited its use against Christians "under penalty of anathema."[2] When fire-

[1] Dexter Masters (ed.), *One World or None*, New York (1946), pp. 40–41.

[2] C. and J. Hefele, *Histoire des conciles* (1912), vol. V, p. 733.

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arms arrived, that same reaction was symbolically dealt with by Ariosto's Orlando, who, having wrested the devilish device from his adversary's grasp, took it out and cast it into the depths of the ocean, exclaiming:

> *O! curs'd device! base implement of death!*
> *Fram'd in the black Tartarean realms beneath!*
> *By Beelzebub's malicious art design'd*
> *To ruin all the race of human kind....*
> *That ne'er again a knight by thee may dare,*
> *Or dastard cowards, by thy help in war,*
> *With vantage base, assault a nobler foe,*
> *Here lie for ever in th' abyss below!*

Some of us are old enough to remember the attempt in our own century to abolish or outlaw the submarine.

ONE REASON WHY we thought that the survival of civilisation depended on the abolition of the bomb was our assumption that any new war would bring it into play. We believed that any new war would bring it into play because we assumed that any new war would be a total war in which the belligerents would use every weapon in their armouries that might prevent defeat and contribute to victory. In 1945, as World War II drew to its end, the American Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall, said: "We can be certain that the next war, if there is one, will be even more total than this one."[3]

Happily this prediction, too, was wrong. For there have been quite a few new wars since it was made, and they have not been "even more total" than World War II, and they have not brought the terrible new armaments into play at all.

Our belief, in the beginning, was that nuclear weapons were more usable than in fact they have proved to be. In the absence of experience, an abstract reasoning made it easy to believe that a sovereign state with nuclear weapons, having a quarrel with another sovereign state (let us say over a canal connecting the Mediterranean with the Red Sea), would blow the other state off the map with nuclear bombs rather than accept defeat. It was equally plausible that Nuclear State *A*, having a quarrel with State *B*, would smuggle some bombs into *B*'s cities—perhaps in the holds of ships, if the cities were coastal—and then tell it that unless it surrendered forthwith its cities would vanish in so many mushroom clouds.

Today we can see, as we could not then, that there is a complex of reasons why the uses of nuclear weapons are severely limited, why they cannot be made to serve as all-purpose weapons for all occasions. A weapon may simply be too powerful for use on the actual occasions of conflict that arise in reality. I can use my open right hand on a child who refuses to eat his spinach, but I cannot use a revolver.

The first lesson of the nuclear age, then, is that the uses of a nuclear armament for actual combat are severely limited—so limited as to be almost non-existent.

One citation will show how far we were from appreciating this in the mid-1940s. In August 1943, at the first Quebec Conference, the head of the scientific Research Committee of the British War Cabinet, Sir John Anderson, told Prime Minister Mackenzie King of Canada that the country which first succeeded in producing atomic bombs would have control of the world. Two years later the United States did become the first country to succeed in producing atomic bombs, but this did not give it control of the world. Even in the years in which it still had a monopoly of atomic bombs it could not use them to control the large part of the world ruled by Stalin; it could not use them to prevent Mao Tse-tung from taking China away from Chiang Kai-shek; it could not use them to prevent Moscow from blockading Berlin; it could not use them to stop the invasion of South Korea. It could not use its nuclear monopoly even to prevent Stalin's Russia from going through the process of breaking that monopoly.

THE DISCOVERY that nuclear weapons are too powerful for actual use in almost any situation that arises is closely associated with another lesson of the nuclear age. In the mid-1940s we had all assumed that any new war would be a total war. What this represented was a long-established and virtually unquestioned attitude toward war and peace. We assumed that there were two alternative and mutually exclusive states of being. The normal state was one of peace. In this state, international relations were conducted through foreign offices and corps of diplomats, while the military men, like firemen between fires, spent their time exercising or playing cards. However, when the

[3] Trumbull Higgins, *Korea and the Fall of MacArthur* (1960), p. 4.

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state of peace gave way, as it occasionally did, to the alternative state of war, then the diplomats retired while the generals and admirals took over and addressed themselves, in each belligerent nation, to the irreducible objective of victory. That objective achieved or lost, and the war over, the diplomats emerged from retirement to take command again.

In this established conception, war was properly total. Once a state resorted to it, or was thrown into it by an attack, it would have been shameful for it not to go all-out for military victory. It would have been shameful for it to allow the political schemes of the scheming politicians to interfere with the achievement of the irreducible objective. It would have been shameful for it to "pull its punches" in the hope of some negotiated political compromise. We know how outraged the Prussian generals were at Bismarck's disposition to fight limited wars and to end them with a political compromise. During World War II, General Marshall was firmly opposed to the British inclination to formulate military strategy with political ends in view: as when Churchill wanted to campaign up through the Balkans for the ulterior political purpose of blocking the expansion of his Russian ally.

Finally, the central issue of the debate that raged in the United States over the Korean War was the Truman Administration's determination to keep it limited—not to risk expanding it into a world war, not to bomb beyond the Yalu, not to use nuclear weapons. The older generation of military men were morally outraged by this political interference with the achievement of the only proper objective. "In war," said General MacArthur, "there is no substitute for victory."

THIS EITHER-OR CONCEPTION, of absolute peace or absolute war, explains why the American military authorities made their war plans, after 1945, only for the contingency of a third world war. And this in turn explains why, in the eighteen months before the Korean War, first General MacArthur and then Secretary Acheson publicly revealed that the American "defensive perimeter" in the Pacific ran through the offshore islands of East Asia, from the Aleutians to the Philippines, excluding all mainland territory like Korea.[4] The anticipated contingency was that of a world-wide total war in which it would have been folly for the United States, which had reduced its ground forces in 1948 to little more than half-a-million men, to attempt to hold any position on the mainland of Asia.

Until the 1950s, the term "limited war" was hardly in the military lexicon of the West at all. It was certainly not in common use, although the historians may have applied it, often nostalgically, to the quaint wars of the eighteenth century. Consequently, the United States was not conceptually prepared to fight the kind of war that it did find itself fighting in Korea.

The either-or concept was one of the factors that led us Americans to reduce our ground forces so drastically. If any new war would inevitably be a total war, fought with the big nuclear armaments, then it was plausible that the role of these old-fashioned conventional forces would be secondary. Victory or defeat would be decided in the air. Britain, too, sacrificed ground forces for nuclear power, only to find that nuclear power was useless to meet her obligations east of Suez and in Germany.

WE WERE ALL quite wrong in our expectations, and *the second lesson of the nuclear age, which stems from the first, is that the only kind of war that can be contemplated in the nuclear age is limited war*. If nations cannot use their most powerful armaments for actual combat it follows quite simply that they cannot fight a total war.

This second lesson conforms to a principle that, in addition to being supported by a simple logic, is exemplified in the fighting behaviour of vertebrates generally. While all-out conflict may be consonant with limited weapons, unlimited weapons require that conflict be limited. This principle, in its application to vertebrates, has been exemplified in the writings of Dr. Konrad Lorenz and discussed in a scholarly fashion by Dr. Irenaus Eibl-Eibesfeldt, who points out that fighting among vertebrates of the same species almost never ends in death and rarely results in serious injury to either combatant.[5] The reason is that, while species without deadly weapons, such as pigeons with their soft bills and weak feet, may fight each other all-out, those that have the means to do each other

[4] MacArthur's interview in *The New York Times* for 2 March 1949; and Acheson's address before the National Press Club in Washington on 12 January 1950.

[5] Konrad Lorenz, *King Solomon's Ring: New Light on Animal Ways* (1952), Chapter 12; "The Fighting Behaviour of Animals," *Scientific American*, December 1961.

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mortal injury never fight all-out. Male rattlesnakes, which can kill each other with a single bite, never bite each other in their combats.

> The two snakes [Dr. Eibl-Eibesfeldt writes] glide along, side by side, each with the forward third of its length raised in the air. In this posture they push head against head, each trying to force the other sideways and to the ground.... The successful snake pins the loser for a moment with the weight of his body and then lets the loser escape.

The loser accepts the verdict, and so the dominance of the winner is established.

THIS BEHAVIOUR has had striking parallels in the behaviour of nations since the nuclear age began. While the United States and the Soviet Union, in the great conflict between them, have had the ability to kill each other with one bite, they have shown an instinctive inhibition against biting—an inhibition greater than ever before in history. In Berlin during the winter of 1948–49, and again in the winter of 1958–59, and again in 1961, the confrontation of Russia and the West was like that of the two snakes who push against each other head to head but refrain from biting. Both sides used tear-gas bombs freely, but never the nuclear bombs that each also had available.

This parallel between the behaviour of vertebrates and the behaviour of nations is not merely metaphoric. Precisely the same logic as applies to the one applies to the other. It has, by genetic evolution, endowed rattlesnakes with certain behavioural inhibitions conducive to their survival as a species; for they would quickly become extinct if they did not have these inhibitions. In the case of nations, the governing logic, directly appreciated, inspires behavioural inhibitions conducive to the survival of the human species. But it is the same logic that has imposed itself on the instincts of rattlesnakes and on the reasoning powers of men, to the same end, and so far with the same result in each case.

WE HAVE FOUND that nuclear weapons are virtually unusable in combat, and that the wars of the nuclear age must therefore be limited. The only time that nuclear weapons actually have been used in combat was in the context of an essentially unlimited war that had begun in the pre-nuclear age, when unlimited wars were still practicable. But this is a situation that could never arise again—unless, of course, it were possible to abolish nuclear weapons, in which case an unlimited war might start and lead, again, to the production of the nuclear weapons that would be used to end it.

To say that nuclear weapons are virtually unusable in combat, however, is not to say that they are unusable as a contingent threat in diplomacy. When we refer to national nuclear armaments as "deterrents" we indicate that they are, in fact, usable in diplomacy. A wise Frenchman recently remarked that his country's so-called *force de frappe* (a term translated from the English "striking force") was misnamed, that it should have been called *force de dissuasion* (after the English "deterrent force"), since it could be used to deter but it could not possibly be used to strike. There is, here, a paradox to which we shall have to return. For the moment we may simply note that nuclear armaments have proved less useful than expected even in diplomacy. The practice of what we too crudely call "nuclear blackmail" has not had a history of success.

During the first half of the 1950s, when Moscow was in the process of developing a great nuclear armament of its own, the best minds in the West laboured under dire forebodings because of an altogether plausible logic that they applied to the approaching future. Up to then there had seemed to be a sort of balance of power in the Cold War. On the one hand, it was thought that the American nuclear monopoly deterred the Red Army from marching to the Channel. On the other hand, the overwhelming superiority of the Red Army to the ground forces opposing it in Europe deterred the United States from using its nuclear armament against Russia, for that (as the Russians warned) might be expected to provoke the occupation of West Europe by the Red Army. The situation, then, was one of mutual deterrence.

However, once Russia had acquired a nuclear armament of its own to deter, by itself, the American nuclear armament, what would then prevent the Red Army from marching on to the Channel with impunity? Surely the balance of power would then have been decisively upset in favour of the Russians, and as a matter of simple realism the change would have to be registered in a series of diplomatic concessions to Moscow. The West would no longer be able to defend Berlin because its nuclear armament would be rendered unusable by the Russian nuclear armament, which could retaliate in kind

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for any nuclear attack, while the Western ground forces would not be able to stand up against the now undeterred Communist ground forces. Under these rapidly approaching circumstances, diplomatic pressure by Moscow should alone suffice to compel the abandonment by the West of Berlin—and perhaps of Turkey, and then Greece, and an indefinite succession of other positions besides.

IT IS CLEAR that the men in Moscow saw the same prospect. After the mid-1950s, as their nuclear capacity grew, they began with increasing assurance to practise a diplomacy of nuclear threat. Russia's first *sputnik* (launched on 4 October 1957) demonstrated that the Russians had stolen a march on the Americans, getting ahead of them in the development of long-range missiles for the delivery of nuclear warheads. Within a week Moscow began to raise an outcry about an alleged plot whereby Turkey, as cat's-paw for the United States, was to attack Syria, a Russian protegée at the time. On 9 October Khrushchev told James Reston of *The New York Times* that if war broke out over Syria

> we are near Turkey and you [the U.S.A.] are not. When the guns begin to fire the missiles can begin flying, and then it will be too late to think about it.

On 12 October he wrote a letter to the British Labour Party (and *mutatis mutandis* to the respective socialist parties of the other European members of NATO) in which he said:

> One cannot ignore the fact that Britain is a member of the North Atlantic bloc, and a military gamble by Turkey and the United States against Syria would in effect predetermine Britain's participation in it. Any extension of the conflict around Syria may plunge Britain into a new devastating war, with all its terrible consequences for the population of the British Isles.

This was the beginning of an ominous campaign to break up the North Atlantic alliance by detaching countries like Britain that supposedly lay, now, at the mercy of the new Russian nuclear armament.

It did not succeed, and perhaps Moscow concluded that the attempt had been premature. A year later (in November 1958) it renewed its campaign of nuclear diplomacy, this time with an air of absolute assurance. On 27 November Khrushchev issued his famous ultimatum, which in effect gave the Western allies just six months to get out of Berlin. In abstract terms it seemed reasonable that the allies, taking the new calculus of power into account, should retreat from Berlin; for they no longer had the military means to defend it, and any attempt to do so seemed likely to lead to their own destruction and, perhaps, the destruction of Berlin as well.

Now, however, a curious thing happened. The Western allies did not obey the dictates of reason. They stood firm, announcing their intention not to retreat. Faced with this stubbornness, Khrushchev at last decided to give himself more time, and in March 1959 he withdrew his ultimatum. In 1961 Khrushchev renewed his ultimatum, and set off the series of demonstrative nuclear explosions that culminated in one estimated at 57 megatons—only to withdraw it again when again the West proved intransigent.

WHAT THIS EXPERIENCE SHOWS is that not only are nuclear weapons virtually unusable in combat, they are of more limited usefulness in diplomacy than we had expected them to be. This has a certain obvious logic of which, however, we must be wary: for, if a weapon is virtually unusable in combat, then the threat to use it will lack credibility, and to the degree that it lacks credibility it will be limited in its effectiveness. *So the third lesson of the nuclear age is that a nuclear armament is of highly limited use in diplomacy.*

SINCE THE DIPLOMATIC effectiveness of the nuclear armament is limited by its credibility, we are brought to ask what are the limits of its credibility. By now we all know the answer. When a nuclear power threatens to use its nuclear armament in response to an aggression that would imminently endanger its very survival, its threat will be more credible than if it should threaten to use that armament in response to some remote provocation by which its vital interests are not directly endangered.

In 1954 U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles resorted, however obliquely, to the threat of massive nuclear retaliation if the Communists should take Dien Bien Phu in Indo-China, which they were besieging. Presumably it was incredible to the Communists that the United States would start a nuclear war over anything as remote as Dien Bien Phu. So they were not deterred; they went ahead and took it anyway.

Why should it not have been the same at Berlin? Certainly Berlin, although it was far more important to the United States than Dien Bien Phu, was not worth a great nuclear war.

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Berlin, however, unlike Dien Bien Phu, was at the centre of the Cold War, not only geographically but politically and symbolically as well. The area of Berlin was, consequently, so sensitive that any shock there might have led to loss of control by the contesting governments.

There is a basic principle that applies here: the greater the stakes, the less the risk that can be accepted. Where one stands to lose one's life one cannot take as big a gamble as where one stands to lose only a dollar bill. If there was only one chance in fifty that, in going through with their attempt to capture Berlin, the men in Moscow would set off a nuclear war in which their own society would be destroyed, then they could not reasonably take that chance.

Although we agree that there are virtually no situations in which a nuclear power would be rationally justified in firing off its nuclear armament, situations might easily arise in which one could not be quite sure that such a power would not do so nevertheless. In such a situation, the power that was contemplating the act of provocation might feel almost certain, but not quite certain, that it would not thereby set off a nuclear war. And, where the survival of one's own society was at stake, even a slight uncertainty would have a powerful inhibiting effect. Uncertainty is the great deterrent. By virtue of it, governments are, in the final test, deterred from extreme acts of provocation. So nuclear armaments, as the Cold War has proved, are powerful influences for keeping the peace. This is their diplomatic use. They serve this purpose simply by their passive presence on the scene.

If nuclear armaments are effective for the maintenance of the *status quo*, they are ineffective for upsetting it. The basic situation at Berlin was that Moscow was using its nuclear threat in an attempt to upset the *status quo*, while the West, also with a nuclear armament, was defending it. In a nuclear confrontation the challenger is at a disadvantage simply because he is the one taking the initiative: because it is his move. He, rather than the defender, is the one who, if he carries out his threat, takes the action that might set off the nuclear fireworks. Consequently, when the moment for that action comes, he is likely to have second thoughts.

A fourth lesson of the nuclear age, then, is that the presence of nuclear armaments in the world's landscape has tended to strengthen the status quo. This is illustrated by the fact that the fantastic territorial anomalies left at the end of World War II, which no one expected to last more than a few weeks or months, are still with us almost a generation later. Korea is still divided. Germany is still divided. West Berlin is still an enclave a hundred miles inside hostile territory. Since the great confrontation began, every attempt to upset the essential *status quo* between the two camps by an abrupt use of force or the threat of force has failed. The attempts from each side to overcome the division of Korea by force failed. The three Russian attempts to get the West out of Berlin failed. The attempt to mount Russian power in Cuba failed. The attempt to seize the Suez Canal failed.

We should recognise at this point that the advent of nuclear armaments is only one among several factors that have been tending increasingly throughout this century to limit the possibilities of using force, or the threat of force, to bring about abrupt changes in the *status quo*. It is, however, a factor of the first importance.

The solidifying of the *status quo* by nuclear armaments is a consequence of the fact that their only function is deterrence. And deterrence does not create change, it prevents change.

In the old days it was assumed that a nation's military security depended largely on defence, on the military ability to stop an invading force. This is part of the reason why we got into such a panic when nuclear weapons first appeared on the scene. For it was in everyone's mind that no defence against these weapons was possible. If an enemy launched a substantial number of nuclear weapons against one's cities there was no way of stopping enough of them to prevent the cities from being destroyed. This was part of the reason why it was thought that the only possible salvation lay in abolishing such weapons forthwith. But deterrence has always been a better alternative to defence, since it prevents any attack at all rather than stopping an attack already begun. The experience of twenty-two years shows that this better alternative has been immensely strengthened by the advent of nuclear armaments.

Deterrence has always been primary in the domain of military security, although never before practised so consciously and explicitly. The balance of power, to which the world has looked in times past for peace and stability, has in fact been nothing but a system of mutual deterrence. In a constellation of rival states with claims

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against each other, or with ambitions that could be fulfilled only at each other's expense, each has been deterred from aggression against the others by the spectacle of the power that would oppose it.

In the pre-nuclear age, however, we all knew that only a multilateral balance of power could be stable, that a bipolar balance was like a chair with only two legs. The logic of this was that, in a balance-of-power situation involving many independent centres of power, there were possibilities of adjustment that tended to prevent any one power from upsetting the balance. An increase of weight by one power could be compensated for by shifting the weights of others against it. But such adjustment is not possible in a confrontation of two powers only. There are no supplementary weights to rectify the balance. Therefore, as soon as one of the two powers gains a distinct advantage over the other the balance is definitively upset. In the classic case (which it was no comfort to recall in the 1950s), Carthage was utterly destroyed by Rome.

With this logic and this precedent in mind, we were naturally alarmed after 1945 by the development of a bipolar balance between the two super-powers and their respective associates. It was under the circumstances of this bipolar confrontation that the arms race got under way, and one could plausibly ask how it could end in anything but the destruction of half the world. During the last years of the 1950s we lived in the terror that an acute enough crisis, say over Berlin, would eventuate in a surprise disarming attack by one side against the other.

Then, however, the situation began to improve. Each side began to feel itself more secure. The bipolar balance began to seem less unstable. What had happened was that both sides had been able to achieve protection for their respective nuclear panoplies by putting them under the ground or under the sea. After that it was evident that a surprise disarming attack would not disarm its victim, who would retain, still, the means of cataclysmic retaliation. Neither side could expect to destroy the other, then, without being destroyed itself. In direct contradiction of the traditional principles upon which our minds had been formed, a bipolar stability ensued.

WHAT HAD CHANGED the classical situation was the advent of "absolute" weapons. Nuclear armaments are "absolute" in the sense that they have the capacity for extinguishing any organised society, no matter how big, at one blow. Between such absolute armaments—as between a big and a little rattlesnake, each of which can kill the other with one bite—the balance of power is bound to remain perfect regardless of limited increments on one side or the other. If two men stand with pistols at each other's temples, their fingers on the triggers, the balance between them is perfect even though one pistol is a ·45 while the other is only a ·22.

The fifth lesson of the nuclear age, then, is that, where the power on either side is absolute, a bipolar balance is relatively stable.

One cannot say that it is absolutely stable. There is the theoretical possibility, at least, of some sensational scientific or technological "breakthrough," such as the development by one side of an effective defence against massive nuclear attack. However, although this would destabilise it in theory—let us say, in games-theory—it seems likely that the element of uncertainty, together with other inhibitions on the use of nuclear weapons, might ensure that it would not be seriously destabilised in practice.

It is not implausible that, in a nuclear environment, the classical situation has been completely reversed: that a bipolar balance of power is stable while a multilateral balance would be unstable or less stable. Is it not precisely the apprehension of this that makes us worry, today, about the possibility of nuclear proliferation?

IN SUMMARY, the five main lessons that may be drawn from the experience of living with nuclear weapons are:

1. *that nuclear weapons are virtually unusable in combat;*
2. *that in a nuclear environment wars must be limited;*
3. *that the usefulness of nuclear armaments in diplomacy is limited to deterrence and defence of the* status quo*;*
4. *that nuclear weapons have, consequently, strengthened the* status quo*; and*
5. *that in a nuclear environment a bipolar balance of power may have a greater stability than the classical balances of the pre-nuclear age.*

Of these five interrelated lessons, the one we should concentrate on and develop in all its implications is the second, that wars must be limited. We can feel no assurance that they will in fact be limited, because the existence of nuclear armaments does not, in itself, automatically limit them. There is always the possi-

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bility that a nation or a ruler might go too far beyond the bounds of prudence, that diplomatic "brinkmanship" might end in loss of control. Therefore, in order to keep our wars limited hereafter, we shall have to develop the concepts, the modalities, and the institutions required to keep them from going out of control.

These concepts, modalities, and institutions are all those that contribute to the maintenance of reciprocal understanding between the opposed parties in a limited war. The parties must have a tacit if not an explicit understanding about going too close to the brink of an all-out war. And they must have means of communicating with each other intelligibly and meaningfully when it becomes necessary to draw back from the brink—as in the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962.

I have already noted that the old concept of total war was of a situation in which the military men replaced the diplomatic policy-makers at the levers of command. In limited war, however, the diplomatic policy-makers have to remain in full and active command. For the parties to a limited war use military force essentially as an instrument of diplomacy for the realisation of diplomatically attainable objectives. This means that diplomatic negotiation between the antagonists should if possible be going on concurrently with the fighting, or at the least that diplomatic contact between them should not be lost.

One implication of this is that the ideological element in conflict has to be minimised. It is almost a contradiction in terms to fight a limited ideological war, for the ultimate objectives of the belligerents in an ideological war are total. Moreover, to the extent that the issue in a conflict is ideological rather than strategic, there is no possibility of meaningful communication, of understanding, or of compromise, between the opposed parties. If the issue is the nominal issue of whether the ideas attributed to Karl Marx or those attributed to John Locke shall rule the world, then the contest will tend to be all-out, directed to the unlimited objective that requires total victory. But if the issue is one of the balance of power, perhaps involving spheres of influence, then the two sides may be able to understand each other very well, and to negotiate a reasonable compromise—as was the case on the night of 9 October 1944, when Churchill and Stalin agreed that Russia was to be predominant in Rumania and Bulgaria while Britain was to be predominant in Greece.

Closely associated with the dangerous ideological view of the world is the myth, which takes many forms, that mankind is divided into two opposed and mutually irreconcilable species, the Good and the Wicked. The two species may be the Servants of God identified with Christendom and the Servants of Satan identified with Islam; or they may be the virtuous Proletarians and the wicked Capitalists; or they may be, as in World War II, the Peace-loving Nations and the Aggressor Nations. Since the virtuous species cannot make deals with the wicked species, and communication to achieve mutual understanding between them is impossible, the confinement of war to limited objectives is implicitly impossible.

Today ideological passion has abated to a considerable extent in the West and in Russia. We must look forward to its abatement in China with the passage of time and, perhaps, the sobering possession of a nuclear arsenal. We must look forward to the time when Washington is effectively represented in Peking, and Peking in Washington. The avoidance or limitation of war depends more on good communication than on any other operational factor.

The whole history of the Korean War, until it was at last brought under control, is a history of the failure of communication. For it was not intended or desired by any of the parties to it; it came about and was continued and enlarged purely because of successive failures of communication between the two sides; and at the cost of something approaching two million casualties it settled nothing.

Item. What General MacArthur and Secretary Acheson meant by their public statements defining the "defensive perimeter" of the United States as running through the islands off the east coast of Asia, and thus excluding Korea, was simply that this was the line it would try to hold in the contingency of a third world war. But Moscow, reading them in the light of the concurrent withdrawal of American forces from Korea, must have interpreted the statements as an assurance that the United States would not defend South Korea even against a local aggression and in the absence of general war. So, because of a failure in communication, it gave its North Korean puppet the signal to move into South Korea.

Item. When the Inchon landing of 15 September resulted in the rout and destruction of the North Korean Army, of which only a remnant was able to make its way back to North Korea,

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the issue arose whether the victorious forces under MacArthur should counter-invade North Korea and liberate it up to the Chinese and Russian frontiers. The issue hung on whether the Chinese armies massed in Manchuria would intervene if they did so. MacArthur's orders were that, if Peking communicated such an intention in time, he was to desist. But Peking did not communicate such an intention, or did not communicate it clearly, until it was too late.

On 22 September the Foreign Ministry in Peking issued a statement in which it said: "We clearly reaffirm that we will always stand on the side of the Korean people . . . and resolutely oppose the criminal acts of American imperialist aggressors against Korea." As a warning, this piece of bombast was much too vague to provide a basis for restraining MacArthur's forces.

Again, on 30 September, Prime Minister Chou En-lai said in a public address that the Chinese people will not "supinely tolerate seeing their neighbours being savagely invaded by the imperialists." What this seemed to represent was the deliberate avoidance of any explicit commitment to intervene militarily if MacArthur's forces marched north—for this could have been said if this had been what was meant. So the next day they did march north across the 38th parallel.

Only then, when it was too late, when the invasion of North Korea was already under way, did Chou En-lai ask the Indian ambassador in Peking to inform Washington that, if American troops (as distinct from the South Koreans who had already done so) should cross the parallel, China would enter the war. But by now the whole movement of invasion was going full tilt. It was too late to check and reverse it. So, because of another failure in communication, MacArthur's forces, including Americans, went on up to the Yalu, three hundred thousand Chinese troops came in against them, and the war that no one wanted was catastrophically enlarged.

One may speculate on how different the situation might have been if Chou En-lai had issued his explicit warning a week earlier than he did, or if Washington had had in Peking an ambassador to find out and to warn it in time that, if MacArthur proceeded north, the Chinese would come in.

The sixth and last lesson to be set down here, then, is that in the nuclear age it is even more important to have good communication between antagonists than between allies.

This was recognised after the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962. During that crisis President Kennedy and Prime Minister Khrushchev had communicated with each other through diplomatic channels that required several hours for the transmission of each message. By contrast, missiles carrying thermonuclear warheads could span the distance in a few minutes. It was conceivable that, in another crisis, both nations would be destroyed unless the words travelled faster than the missiles. Consequently, the so-called "hot line" was set up as a rapid-communications link between Moscow and Washington. It has since demonstrated its utility by the use that President Johnson and Premier Kosygin made of it during the Arab-Israeli war of June 1967.

Similar communications links have now been set up between Paris and Moscow and between London and Moscow. We may reasonably look forward to the day when there are hot lines running from the Western capitals to Peking as well.

When the nuclear age first burst upon us it seemed as if nothing short of a miracle could save human civilisation from a terrible doom. Now, however, we have lived with nuclear weapons for over twenty-two years. We have seen how they have tended to keep wars limited. We have seen how they have, for the most part, kept the Cold War cold. We have seen how they have produced a certain stability in the balance of power, and how they have tended to stabilise international relations as a whole.

This is not to deny the danger that still persists, the danger against which we must take all possible measures, the danger by which we must constantly govern our thinking. It is hard to believe that mankind has been rising in consciousness, understanding, and vision for a million years only to go smash in the end. But accidents happen that cut off the most promising lives of individuals, and cataclysmic disaster brought on by itself has often been the lot of mankind. It is precisely because we have so much reason to look forward to a larger future that we should cultivate an understanding of the factors that make for the limitation of conflict.

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Slawomir Mrozek

Ad Astra

THE novelist decided to visit the milk bar partly to have a drink and partly for more general reasons. There his attention was attracted by a young man who was standing in the queue awaiting service. He was an ordinary-looking young man but a few things distinguished him from thousands like him: the exceptional pallor of his skin, the signs of exhaustion on his face and body, and his misty eyes. His clothes were clean but crumpled as if he had just finished a long and tiring journey. When his turn came, he spoke to the waitress in a low but clear voice, enunciating carefully but without exaggeration.

"Sixty rolls to take away and a glass of milk, please."

Such an order should cause no surprise in our era when excursions are available to everyone and the inhabitants of even the remotest corners tour the country in groups. Yet it aroused in the novelist an even greater interest in the young man. Collecting his drink, to which he was entitled by having made an appropriate payment at the stylishly designed cash desk, the author chose a seat from which he could keep the young man under observation.

The youth's hand shook as he raised the glass of the nourishing milk and drank the first gulp. Immediately his waxen face acquired a faint blush. As if obeying an irresistible force, the young man took out a fountain pen and started writing something on the paper napkins provided at the table.

He wrote without interruption, only occasionally taking a bite of one of the rolls or raising his glass with an automatic movement. Evidently each mouthful increased his strength because he wrote faster and faster. When his glass was empty and the roll finished, he looked around as if awakening from a dream, put the pen away and ran out into the street, taking with him the remaining fifty-nine rolls.

As soon as the door closed behind the young man, the novelist collected the manuscript on the napkins that had been left lying on the table. His practised eyes ran down the pages. It was a complete outline of a novel. In spite of some faults and shortcomings it bore the unmistakable mark of genius.

The novelist ran outside in pursuit of the young man. There was little hope of catching up with him among the throng on the pavements but he did spot him walking away at a brisk pace. Suddenly the young man stopped. His face reflected an internal struggle. Then he turned towards a bench in a nearby square, sat down and feverishly began writing on the crumpled paper in which his rolls had been wrapped. The novelist stood behind the bench and looked over the young man's shoulder.

He was astonished by what he could read. It was a development of the outline written on the paper napkins, with some of the faults removed, and it represented a tremendous step forward.

SLAWOMIR MROZEK *is one of the best known of Poland's younger generation of writers. His play* Tango, *which was played for years in Warsaw, was also produced in London and elsewhere in the West.*

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THE NOVELIST introduced himself. The young man looked at him with his eyes misty, but a flame of genius burning in them. After many years of exhausting creative work the novelist sensed that his end was approaching and he was eager to take young talented men under his wing; he wanted to build them up into his successors and help them to achieve fame.

"You can't stay here," he said excitedly. "You must come to my place. Leave the rolls behind."

The young man was obviously reluctant to accept the invitation. He bowed, shuffled his feet and clearly wanted to get away. This was all the more strange as he did not give an impression of shyness.

Almost by force the novelist conducted him to his flat. On the way he opened before the young man splendid vistas for the future and promised his help. The youth listened in silence, glancing at him in a hard and puzzling way. It seemed that were it not for the fifty-nine rolls restricting his movements, he would offer active resistance.

This did not escape the notice of the novelist. "Poor, wild, and a genius..." he thought with emotion. "One has got to look after him, watch him...." When they reached his apartment he locked the young man in the study. He did not mention the rolls. Let the youngster keep them. There was no point in objecting to those peculiar habits acquired, no doubt, during the recent, difficult period. Instead he asked his housekeeper to prepare a large and tasty lunch. While the young man was eating the meal behind the locked door of the study, the novelist feverishly telephoned his friends to announce his astonishing discovery. Then he called his housekeeper.

"What's he doing there?" he inquired.

"He's eaten his food and he's writing again. You've brought yourself a packet of trouble, you have," she added, crossing herself. She was a simple countrywoman.

"That's fine, that's fine..." said the novelist rubbing his hands.

The afternoon passed and the young man was still writing. In the evening the light was burning in the study. The novelist felt tired after the unusual events of the day. He put the key of the study under his pillow, went to bed and fell asleep.

HE WOKE UP with a start feeling that something untoward had happened. Putting on his red dressing-gown of raw Chinese silk, he rushed to the study. With trembling hands he turned the key. Rays of the rising sun filled the room. In the quiet light of the morning, which seemed to promise a new and a happier life, the sheets of expensive paper had the lustre of ivory. They were covered with handwriting and lay in an untidy heap on the desk. There was no one in the study.

In two strides the novelist was at the desk. It did not take him long to establish what was on those sheets. What revealed itself in the milk bar, still uncertain and elusive in its first brilliant outline, and later was drawn in firmer strokes on the bench in the square, was now fully crystallised in the blinding sparkle of a finished masterpiece.

It was clear that the exhausted body of the young man quickly converted food into creative energy, and it was only the lack of essential calories and vitamins that had hitherto prevented him from writing. The plentiful lunch in the study must have led to the decisive breakthrough.

The open balcony door indicated the escape route. A fresh wind was ruffling the curtains. It could not have been long since the young genius climbed down the branches of the Russian vine, vaulted over the fence and found himself in the street. He had taken the rolls with him.

In a hurry the novelist put on a Bulgarian sheepskin jacket and ran downstairs. The invalid newsagent in the kiosk at the corner was his first informant. Yes, he had seen the young man, he had even spoken to him and sold him some foolscap paper. The road sweeper had also seen him waiting at the tram stop. "A lovely boy he was. And he kept on taking some paper out of his pocket

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and writing something." In spite of the hurry and excitement the novelist could not refrain expressing his admiration: "He writes even during an escape? I've found a genius, one who is born only once in a hundred years. Am I to lose him now?" With redoubled energy he continued his pursuit.

According to the testimony of the road sweeper the prodigious young man had boarded a tram. This could have taken him only in one direction and not very far either because one stop farther the line ended at the railway station. Full of anxiety the novelist made his way there. Many trains left that station for different destinations and the fugitive could already be far away. There was nothing to promise that he would ever be found. Turning to the departure platforms the novelist noticed the porter at the barrier; instead of checking tickets the man was reading something and his face reflected a succession of strong and contrasting emotions. At one moment he was smiling, then looked pensive, now and again he wiped a tear from his eye, while the passengers were coming and going as they pleased. Approaching, the novelist saw that the railwayman was reading sheets of foolscap paper covered in an uneven writing as if the author's hand had been jerked by the sharp up and down and sideways movements of a tram.

"Where did you get this?" he asked in a voice flattened by a vague but definitely bad premonition.

The railwayman found it difficult to tear himself away from his reading and it was a long time before he understood the question. He must have been far away, in a world created by the lines he was reading. At first he just shouted: "What a man! Now that's something! What a man!" When at last he came down to earth he explained reluctantly that he had been given the manuscript by a young man who carried a lot of rolls on to the platform. After this explanation he resumed his reading with obvious impatience. The novelist did not waste any more time and ran to the end of the platform.

A few suburban trains were waiting empty, their locomotives breathing sleepily. He had no difficulty in inspecting compartment after compartment, carriage after carriage. Where could the young man be? Hiding under a seat? He checked the timetable. His researches showed that no train had left the station after the young man had passed the ticket collector at the barrier.

Distressed and helpless he wandered from platform to platform. He realised that he had made a fool of himself by telephoning his friends to announce the discovery of an unknown genius. The proof of the sheets covered in writing was not enough. The whole affair sounded most suspicious. His friends would almost certainly believe that it was he himself who had written the masterpiece and invented the tale about the unknown young author, just to draw attention to himself.

He was now in the goods yard. Odd rail trucks and sheds seemed to be dozing and waiting. As he passed one of the trucks he heard a hum as if from a beehive, yet not quite like it. Having spent some years in the country the novelist was familiar with the sounds of nature and he knew that neither bees nor any other living creatures could have made that noise.

It was coming from a truck of the kind used for transporting horses or goods requiring care and cover. He put his ear to the planks at the side of the truck. They smelled of tar, coal dust, and open spaces. Now the sound was much louder and undoubtedly originated on the other side of the partition. To get to the sliding door the novelist had to walk round the truck. He stepped over the rails, turned the corner and then he saw. . . .

The door was open. In the truck young men were sitting and writing doggedly. There were sixty of them. Their pens moving over paper with lightning speed made that peculiar noise; neither scratching, nor buzzing or rustling, but a kind of hum.

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Among them was the fugitive, writing like the others. They were all very much alike; the same modest, neat and slightly crumpled suits. In spite of individual features, all their faces bore the same noble expression, the mark of genius.

The novelist tugged the fugitive's sleeve. He wanted to say something, to ask a question, but the young man looked at him as if from the distance of another planet. His eyes showed such terrible indifference and such remoteness that the novelist, turning pale, dropped his hand and, stumbling over the rails, started to flee. He was pursued by the curious hum, rustling and murmur of pens.

His flight was interrupted by an old railwayman who looked at him with curiosity. The pale, undisturbed eyes of the old man brought the novelist back to normality.

"That truck . . .?" he asked, gasping for breath and pointed in the direction from which he had come. "What's the meaning of it?"

The old man sighed.

"Oh, they've brought them in a sealed truck, no one knows from where. Are they writing now? Yes, they never stop. When we opened the door they neither praised the Lord, nor even said 'Good morning,' but just started scribbling. It seems to me that they also wrote during the journey, but not much, because they were hungry. They must have come from far away and had no food left. One of them went out to buy rolls. Each got one, washed it down with water and off they went writing. Faster and faster they go. . . . Who knows? . . ." The old man fell silent.

"Thank you so much . . . ." whispered the novelist.

"Don't mention it. We pointsmen are used to seeing all sorts of things."

THERE WAS NO joy left in the novelist's heart. Deep in troubling and confusing thought, his head low, he slowly walked out of the station. It was still early but the mere notion of starting work made him feel tired. Reluctantly he walked toward the town centre, struggling to lift his feet, which seemed to be attached to bars of lead. A restaurant. The waiter tried to tempt him with a large selection of dishes but after a moment's reflection all the novelist ordered was a roll.

"And a glass of vodka," he added as an afterthought.

He hoped that alcohol would help to bring into focus the vague disquiet that had been nagging him. The roll, of course, had a special purpose.

"Another roll, please," he ordered after a while, "and another vodka."

For lunch he had three rolls washed down with vodka, nothing else. But the hazy, troubling thought did not become any clearer. During the afternoon he was seen here and there, every time less sober. That day he did not go home at all. He spent it alternating between a bakery and a bar. By the late evening he had consumed fifteen rolls and could eat no more. He limited himself to drinking alcohol. Dawn found him in a night-club.

"Only fifteen, Joe. Only fifteen," he said to the barman. "The individual is nothing to a collective. Skin off your nose, Joe."

His friends carried him home.

IN THE MORNING he could not get the sleep he needed so badly. He was disturbed by one telephone call, then another, and a third. His fellow novelists. Their voices were full of excitement. In between the calls he fell into heavy sleep, swollen with alcohol, getting lost in the clouds of his poisoned subconscious, painfully chasing remote associations and, at times, clearly touching nothingness. Yet, each of the successive telephone calls resulted in some information penetrating into his mind and by noon he had the following picture of events:

A taxi had drawn up in front of the publishing house which specialises in fiction. Four young men got out dressed in clean but modest and crumpled suits. They had brought with them some one hundred and

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twenty pounds of MASTERPIECES. One of them had a drum. Marching in step to its beat they entered the publishing house. Their behaviour was restrained, indeed very reserved, but polite. Meaningless names. The director, beside himself with admiration, immediately offered them the highest advance, but all they asked for was the refund of the cost of paper and enough money to pay for the most modest subsistence. Having signed their contracts they went away in the same taxi. The employees of the publishing house, who had watched them leave, swore that the young men started writing again as soon as they were seated in the car. And the editors who read the manuscripts declared that they had never cast their eyes on anything *so perfect*.

For the novelist it was to be a very difficult day indeed. With every hour that passed his health improved a little after the previous night's alcoholic excesses, but the increasingly frequent telephone calls indicated that the city was in the grips of a sensational affair. More and more friends and acquaintances called him, even people he hardly knew, as if in the face of an unusual danger they all felt a compelling need to achieve general understanding and be able to lean on each other. The friends he himself had telephoned two days previously to announce his discovery also rang up. Only forty-eight hours ago! Then the affair had not yet taken the unexpected turn. In angry voices his friends were asking for details, inquiring about the young genius, and when they learnt about his escape they would utter odd cries and hang up as if in a hurry to go somewhere—probably to a café. His housekeeper refused to answer all his summonses and would not appear; he was tortured by an unquenchable thirst.

AT LAST HE HAD a telephone call from a critic well known for his cool and penetrating judgment. His intervention introduced the first element of order into the stormy confusion of the situation. He demanded to be shown the young man's manuscript so that he could analyse it.

Swaying slightly the novelist went to his desk. The manuscript was not there. He searched the desk, then the whole room. In vain. He could not find it in the bedroom or in the sitting-room even though he thought that in his befuddled state he might have mislaid it there. In despair he reached the kitchen and found the housekeeper sitting on her bed, immersed in the manuscript. He could not believe his eyes. That simple woman had always kept at a distance from literature. Also to touch something on her master's desk had hitherto amounted to sacrilege in her eyes.

He tried to take the manuscript away but she resisted. She held the sheets in both hands, reading slowly line by line and would not let go; such was the power of a *true* masterpiece over this simple soul. In the struggle he must have pushed her too hard and she fell back, striking her head against the metal rail of the bed. Only a torn-off scrap of paper was left in her hand. This she was clutching to her breast and still wanted to continue reading. Her face bore the expression of silent bliss. The novelist put on a Vietnamese jacket and went out with the regained manuscript under his arm.

The critic's analysis confirmed all expectations. This was a masterpiece, contained in an artistically perfect form, answering to all the criteria of true literature. More than that. There was something miraculous, something inexplicably beautiful in each sentence. The work broke all frontiers and reached out into the unknown and the unexpected. At the same time it seemed to express the sense of the universe, while leaving enough unsaid to draw in, to tempt and to create a never fully satisfied sense of longing. One thing was crystal clear: after books of such calibre nobody would have anything more to say.

THE EXPERIENCE of the next few days fully confirmed the critic's analysis. The masterpieces deposited at the publishing house by the delegation of geniuses appeared in print very quickly because all other works of fiction were immediately

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withdrawn to make room for the new, unsurpassed novels. Great joy and animation blossomed out in publishing circles. After a period when publishers had to hunt manuscripts, some of them perhaps even very good manuscripts, search for them in authors' studies and extract them from proud and jealous men, suddenly the situation was transformed; there was an abundance of masterpieces *so perfect* that even the smallest correction or change was unthinkable. The first editions were sold out on publication and among the buyers were simple people as well as sophisticated *cognoscenti*. At once not only novelists, but also critics, found themselves threatened. The novels were so unquestionably masterpieces that they offered little opportunity for critical assessment and for the writing of Press articles. Even simple praise was unnecessary because it was superfluous.

In the countryside peasants left their ploughs to read, work fell behind, the crops were in danger and a threat hung over the food supplies. Meanwhile, apart from further editions of the first batch of books, a further wave of novels of similar quality could be expected any moment because the delegation of geniuses paid another visit to the publishing house, this time in a lorry containing several hundred pounds of new masterpieces. All other fiction just gathered dust in odd corners, forgotten by everybody, suddenly eclipsed, grey and unwanted. Only the mysterious new authors were being read.

A week after the events described at the beginning of this story our novelist was on his way to a publishing house which specialised in poetry. So far only the realm of the novel had been hit by the over-abundance of masterpieces. His briefcase contained a few poems, composed not without effort, as he did not find it easy to switch to an unfamiliar form. He hoped, however, to be able to collect an advance. There seemed little else he could try. In the street he met a distinguished poet who was a friend of his.

"No point in going there," the poet warned him sadly. "They're already there. Our turn has come. I'm told that yesterday their poetry section went into action."

For a few moments they walked side by side in silence. The sky was cloudy and it started to rain.

"Let's go to the theatre," said the novelist at last. "I've had an idea for a play. It's been in my head for some time now."

They turned toward the theatre, but they were too late. Simultaneously with the poetry section, the play and film scenario sections had also gone into action, as did sections dealing with the opera, musical comedy, revue, all forms of variety and children's books. The satirical theatre had already been conquered. That very day many people had to be carried out of there on stretchers because they were laughing so much that it endangered their health. This was the signal for the final confrontation.

BIRDS WERE SETTLING for the night among branches of trees when the novelist alighted at a small provincial station. He looked round and set out along a pot-holed road through a forest. From all sides came the sound of dry twigs breaking under invisible feet and the rustling of leaves. At the first clearing he joined a group of other writers. Here a playwright gingerly tried to put his foot on a plank over a stream, there some leading critics were marching along a dyke. An author of children's stories was pushing his way through a hazel grove. From a tree nursery came the cry of a jay; this was the agreed signal of the *avant-garde* poets. But the documentary writers just walked straight ahead, while one of the realists stopped to observe the behaviour of ants. A woman who specialised in fairy tales managed to flush a slatternly fox from his lair. Someone was hooting among the trees.

And so they moved on from all sides, obeying the summons, and converging on a large clearing with a hunting lodge, where a conference room was ready for their meeting.

When the last of them emerged breathless from the forest, with leaves stuck in his hair, the doors were locked. Some of the most vigilant critics stood guard at the approaches

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from the dyke. The mood was serious, the discipline exemplary. Everyone was searched, but a few individuals had already managed to suck alcohol out of acorns. For them beds were made in the alcove.

THE CHAIRMAN OPENED the proceedings. He reminded them that the ostensible, official reason for calling the conference in that remote spot was to commemorate a certain folk poet whose verse described the beauty of the region. But it was not the commemoration that attracted this large gathering. "That's why I move," he said, "that we should pay our homage without further ado and then get down to business."

There was no dissent. After the homage to the poet one of the members of the committee rose to speak.

"It has fallen as my task," he began, "to explain to you our position. It seems to me, however, that this is only too well known to each of you. The one encouraging feature is the clasping of hands, the general consensus. . . ."

"Richard is a rascal!" someone shouted from the back.

". . . the general consensus, I repeat. I can see here our youngest colleagues and the veterans of our profession, followers of the realist school and the most advanced members of the *avant-garde*. Let us now establish the main facts.

"A group of new, murderously gifted authors has entered the field. Who are those newcomers? I think that the answer to this question will come as a surprise to all of you. For a long time people have been expecting visitors from outer space, from another planet. They were expected in various strange shapes; they were to perform the most fantastic deeds. But no one foresaw that they would come exclusively in the guise of writers of *absolute genius*, whose word would become *The Absolute*. No mysterious rays, no new forms of energy or astounding machines, but literary geniuses. For us, the professionals of the written word, their appearance has been as devastating as the arrival of engineering geniuses from another planet would be for our technicians. Alas, fate has struck against us and not against the engineers. . . ."

"Down with engineering schools!" someone shouted.

". . . Can we be surprised that our work is rejected by publishers, editors and directors, and that only theirs is accepted? Let's be frank with ourselves. All of us. Faced with *The Absolute*, faced with *The Enigma of the Universe*, none of us present here is any better or more talented than his colleagues. . . ."

There was commotion in the hall and shouts of "Speak for yourself!", "Shame!", "Who isn't better?", "What?", "Who has no talent?", "What about positivism? . . ."

"And now let me explain," continued the speaker, "why we couldn't call this meeting openly and had to resort to the pretext of paying homage to the poet. Well, the whole country is reading only the new authors. Even the most harmonious families have started fighting over copies of their works. The printers simply can't meet the demand. Now take us. All our lives we've been striving for perfection, for mystery. I'll go so far as to say that this was the reason for the respect which has surrounded us. And now, suddenly, those young men appear. They realise our dreams, from the very first they are perfection and mystery personified. And we, instead of humbling ourselves, instead of singing: 'Hosanna, behold the achievement, behold the revelation, behold the creation,' we begin to pout, we don't like it, we even call a meeting against the envoys of *The Absolute*. It wouldn't look good, would it? And what would public opinion say?

"You may, of course, say that after all we've called such a meeting, but in secret, and you may ask how do we appear in our own eyes? You'll forgive me if I don't answer this question in public. I leave it to each of you individually. . . ."

VOICES: "It's a publishers' coterie!" "Give me back my notebook!" "What is it? . . ."

". . . And I repeat that we are all equal compared with *The Absolute*. . . ."

VOICES: "And what about the grants?"

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"Now, after this short introduction, without wasting any more time on the discussion of matters which have been decided for us by fate, I should like you to consider ways and means of defence, though I must admit that our chances are slender."

The assembly was greatly animated. Nobody was dozing. Some voices shouted: "Let's go to it! Let's go! Where's Stan?" Others tried to hush them. It was already dark outside and the forest rose like a black wall. Someone brought in a few electric lamps. The critics, who had been left on the lookout, were calling to each other: *"Beeeeee on guaaaard . . . beeeeee on guaaaaaaard...."* Some people, feeling hungry, unwrapped their sandwiches.

THE NEXT SPEAKER was the member of the committee in charge of intelligence. In contrast to his predecessor he avoided generalities or any attempt at synthesis. Anyway this was not expected of him. His task was to provide information and this he did in his low but clear voice, producing a stream of facts and statistics. The assembly was told that the young geniuses were organised on military lines. They were divided into four units, called scriptoons, each fifteen men strong. The scriptoons in turn were divided into three writoons consisting of five men. All the young men lived in barracks and went out only in organised units solely for the purpose of delivering the next load of masterpieces. After signing the contracts and collecting the advances they always withdrew in complete order, returning to their base.

VOICES: "How much do they get per thousand words?"

According to intelligence agents the geniuses wrote steadily, applying a method borrowed from the infantry battle manual. This manual instructs that in case of attack, a unit should be divided into two lines, one of them advancing in spread-out formation, the other giving it covering fire while lying on the ground. The two lines leapfrog each other, taking the two roles in turn. Similarly, the geniuses were working in two shifts. While one was writing, the other was reading the work of their colleagues, thus improving and developing their talents still further. That disposed of the hope that quality might become a victim of intensive production.

VOICES: "And if one had a few drinks with them?"

The speaker explained in level tones that the geniuses partake of a modest but healthy diet. They avoid stuffy and smoky places, always take a walk before going to bed, go in for gymnastics and are always asleep before midnight.

On hearing all this the meeting grasped the full terror of the situation. A frightened silence filled the hall. Outside the moon rose above the forest. In an unnatural voice someone demanded more light.

THE SPEAKER WENT ON to report on the attempts which had been made to reduce the popularity of the geniuses. Determined and brave volunteer-writers visited public libraries disguised as readers and tried to induce in people an aversion to the masterpieces. They were given short shrift. And that was all the committee had been able to achieve. Now it was the turn of the assembly to make proposals for action.

Someone suggested that the writers should simply turn in force on the readers. The novelist, recounting the experience he had had with his housekeeper, demonstrated the futility of this course of action. Then a discussion started on how native letters could be improved. "More inspiration." "Writing by candle light." "Expelling Len from the Association." . . . Such was the crop of this stormy debate.

A tall man, who had been sitting silently at the back of the hall, rose to speak. Though he had not taken part in the debate, people had been looking in his direction with respect. His hair was white from the creative effort of writing, his face deeply furrowed by ideas for plays and novels. A murmur passed through the hall. He looked at his

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audience with clear eyes, and his deep voice reverberated:

"Colleagues! Brothers! Our assembly is drawing to a close and I must admit that, though we've heard many reasonable remarks, they don't add up to a clear course of action. That's why, for the sake of our common cause, we've decided to take the control of matters into our hands."

Absolute silence greeted these words and all eyes were on the Leader. He poured out some water from a carafe, took a sip, and continued:

"You've heard our agents report that the geniuses write steadily and together, while we, dispersed, engage in individual skirmishes. I can see only one solution: join our forces, keep together, forget your personal interests. Let everyone get ready and go to his appointed place at once. We shall set up an armed camp. There, by concentrating our talents and our ideas, by exchanging views and themes, by discussion and by pooling our creative forces, we'll produce splendid works, capable, if only for the time being, of standing up to our rivals. There's only one way—to the camp!"

"To the camp!" shouted the assembly as a new spirit took over their minds, dispelling all weakening doubt. "To the camp!" The shout shook the walls of the ancient hunting lodge, echoed in the courtyard and came back, reflected by the black wall of the trees. Dogs began to howl and the pitch burner, who led a half-human, half-animal existence in the middle of the forest, jumped up from his pallet, his hands groping for his axe. But the writers embraced each other with tears in their eyes—a truly beautiful sight. Old enemies were shaking hands and swearing mutual friendship, the young and the old were in each other's arms and here and there a man would hug a woman as if she was his sister. Tears of joy were in everyone's eyes.

DURING the greatest commotion the novelist, who had been sitting at the side, slipped out to obey a call of nature. The night greeted him with her icy breath, the moon with its green gaze. Suddenly in the turret of the lodge an owl hooted mournfully, making the novelist recoil and wet his trouser leg. Gloomy forebodings assailed the novelist's mind.

All over the countryside writers were moving to the appointed place, their typewriters at the ready, some of them even accompanied by their wives. The Leader's choice fell on a spot well known for its beneficial influence on inspiration. On one side the eye was gladdened by the sight of a broad river flowing through sandy flats and willow brakes, on the other hills and gorges were coming down towards the river. In their semicircle rose an old town protected by ancient fortifications. Columns of writers were converging on it, passing through orchards swathed in their bridal veils of blossom, riding in formation along dusty country lanes. Peasants ran from their cottages to admire the foreign-looking cohorts, but they had to screen their eyes, such was the glare of the sun reflected from thousands of spectacles and high foreheads. And the writers advanced as if they had not a single care in the world, cracking jokes, laughing loudly.... Only children, or the select few to whom the gift of innocence had been given, can enjoy themselves in such a manner. And yet....

The novelist was tormented by a strange sense of guilt. He took his duties seriously, spoke in debates, fought shoulder to shoulder. Nobody said a cross word to him, no one looked at him askance and yet, remembering how the evil had started with his visit to the milk bar, he was worried.

Clearly, guilt was not just a matter of deeds, but of very existence, of being here and there.

One evening during the second month of the siege the Leader inspected the guns on the ramparts. There were only a few of them, but they were well protected. The small beleaguered garrison had been cut off for a long time. Volunteers would go out one after another armed with their manuscripts at the ready, but they all disappeared without trace. Inside the fortress things were going badly.

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There was a shortage of ideas, plots and themes.... What was left of them had, by order of the Leader, to be kept in a small underground store and then rationed out to writers in greatest need. There were outbreaks of dissension. All were still writing, but many were worried by the absence of suitable projects, though they maintained an outward appearance of good spirits.

Fog was rising from the riverside meadows and filling the gorges with its milky vapour. Surrounded by his staff the Leader strode along the battlements. Behind him the novelist carried the Leader's heavy battle pen.

"The Pegasus squadron is grumbling again," reported the Warrant Officer. "They say the ration is too small."

"Too small! Ignorant lot. They don't know what small rations are," said the Leader. "And what's this?"

The A.D.C. looked through his field-glasses. "I can't make it out, Sir."

The Commander of the battery put his eye to the telescope. "It's something, but I don't know what."

They exchanged silent glances. Dusk was already descending from the hills and the river took on leaden hues. A rising wind brought the voices of chattering camp followers.

The novelist stepped forward. "Sir," he said, "with your permission I'll go. I'll get through."

The Leader looked into his eyes for a long time and put his hand on the novelist's shoulder. "Go," he said.

BEFORE MIDNIGHT, having successfully avoided the meadows, he found himself in the willow brakes. From time to time, when the galloping clouds revealed the disc of the moon, he stood dead still, trying to look like a marsh bird, hoping to change into a reed or to sink to the bottom. In those moments he held his breath and listened. When the fleecy clouds darkened the night once more he laboriously moved forward, placing each foot with care.

A splash near him. A barbel? A water bird? Perhaps....

Beads of sweat appeared on his forehead. A herd of clouds had just fled and the river glistened with a thousand serpents' scales.

The novelist remembered his quiet study with the gentle light of the lamp, his literary work, imperfect as it was, yet human, unlike the frighteningly cold breath of genius from the outer galaxies.

A severed head stared at him with burning eyes, its blue tongue hanging out. It laughed at him....

Courage! He only needed to reach the high bank. Here it was. As he climbed its slope he felt the first glimmer of hope. Turning round, he could just see the camp with a few fires burning at the guard posts. He felt a spasm in his heart. There his friends and colleagues were resting before tomorrow's literary toil.

All he had to do now was to cross the meadow.

What is this? The clouds are parting? The moon emerges and its horribly full face illumates the clearing. The novelist finds himself face to face with *The Absolute*. He recoils. Behind him an enormous spreading oak. He leans against its trunk. At least he has something solid behind him.

He pulls out his faithful Waterman and grasps it with both hands. There may be no hope, but he will not surrender, he will argue with *The Absolute*.

Among the trees swift pens begin to rustle on paper.

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Column

EVERY SCHOOLBOY knows that the British Empire was acquired in a fit of absence of mind. Its remnants have now been disposed of as the price of imposing prescription charges. So its end has been as curious as its beginning, and it has left the British people with the feeling that they have made a rather important contribution to history without knowing what they were doing. Intention has played very little part in it all. It is as if history had picked on a particular people and used them, willy-nilly, for its own ends.

At least, this is how things are apt to look to the British, and there are certainly some of them who have welcomed the end of empire as a chance, at long last, to choose their own purposes for themselves. But among these one cannot count Harold Wilson. His own view has always been that foreign policy was only another name for imperial policy. This has now been proved untenable. So has the associated view that Britain's future was irredeemably pledged to maintaining an exchange rate of $2·80 to the pound sterling. No one likes to be an iconoclast of his own idols, but this seems to be the part for which history has irrevocably cast Mr. Wilson. Perhaps he can take comfort from the fact that he has not been alone in his errors. He had the Cabinet's unanimous support when he believed they were right, just as he now has, with one unimportant exception, its unanimous support in realising they were wrong. To most people this would be cold comfort for abject failure; to a Prime Minister it is apt to make failure look like a phase of success on the instalment plan.

In such circumstances, and under such leadership, it would be remarkable if the British people were able to draw the correct conclusions from the consequences of devaluation. To them, withdrawal East of Suez looks like the end of a purely British imperial policy, for they have always managed to combine the burdens of world empire with a remarkably insular view of their own affairs and interests. Yet British expansion overseas was not simply an incident in the history of an island race; it was part of a secular process, which even in its latest phase has lasted for over five hundred years, by which European civilisation as a whole has tried to impose its own values on the rest of the world and has had to admit defeat, primarily because of what M. Malraux has called "the return of Asia into history." In turn Spain, Portugal, England, Holland, France, Belgium, even that late-comer Germany, entered the race; only Portugal is now left, and Mr. Wilson, among the ruins of his policy, might meditate on the curious fact that the only European state still willing to maintain its empire by force is the most backward and decadent in Europe and our oldest ally.

If the British people were to draw the right conclusions from the total defeat of the Prime Minister's policies over the last three years, they would understand that their history, whatever its glories, has been the history not of an island but of an integral part of the continent of Europe, and that nothing a mad, great old man may do or say can make any difference to this fundamental fact. It is fortunate that Mr. Roy Jenkins, the new Chancellor, is of all the present Cabinet the one Minister who understands this most clearly, in a way which poor Mr. Callaghan never did and Mr. Wilson, however hard he tries, never can. No one in his senses will expect Mr. Jenkins to produce, out of his hat as it were, a New Economic Policy which will cure all our present difficulties, and he is right to take time for reflection before he even tries to do so. It may even give the opportunity for the Government, the Labour party, and the British people themselves to recover from the near panic into which they have recently been driven. But politically, in the long and even the short run, it may now be possible for Mr. Jenkins to evolve a programme which at long last will make sense of British policy.

IN THE MEANTIME, of course, as in all times of trouble and confusion, there is no lack of false prophets, fresh from the desert and a diet of locusts and wild honey, offering their particular cures for our discontents. It is sad to number among them the new Poet Laureate. But his commissioned poem for the *Daily Mail*, with its invocation of the Angel of the *Blitz*, and its exhortation to us to work harder in the service of Glory, Common Wealth and Home, seems just about as wrong about everything as one could possibly be, and as silly as anything he ever wrote in support of the Communist Party or the Women's Institute, which is saying a great deal.

On the other hand, one should not take so harsh a view of the Five Typists of Surbiton. Theirs was a modest and spontaneous gesture. No one probably was more surprised than they were to find it magnified into an event of

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national importance, and one's heart warms towards them for their refusal to exploit it, and themselves, on television. One feels that one day the Five Typists of Surbiton will pass into the world of folk legend and nursery rhyme, like the Three Wise Men of Gotham. Anthropologists will search for explanations of who they were or what they did to earn their place in folk memory, but it seems improbable that by then anyone will hit on the correct answer that they were five young ladies who, in a dreadful hour, tried to save Britain by their example.

But there is also Captain Robert Maxwell, M.P., and Prince Philip, and *I'm Backing Britain* and *Buy British*, and even the Prime Minister's own personal *Stop Knocking and Stop Knarking* campaign, which, to judge by the present disorder in the Labour Party, is not having much success. One somehow expects Captain Maxwell to appear at any moment in one of those guardsman's uniforms one can buy at *I was Lord Kitchener's Valet*; and it is curious that the popularity of the Union Jack stickers distributed in support of *I'm Backing Britain* was long ago anticipated by Carnaby Street and the Portobello Road. In his passion for the flag Captain Maxwell will find himself in some, for him, strange company and at the head of some very queer troops.

Fortunately, there is no need to take all this very seriously at the moment; unless, of course, Mr. Osbert Lancaster is right in detecting in it a whiff of the Germany of the early '30s and in predicting that those who cry *Buy British!* today may tomorrow cry *Sieg Heil!* Is there any kind of truth in such a suggestion? There is at least the truth that people in Britain today are bewildered and confused as they were in Germany then, though with better reason. There is also the truth that in Britain today people feel something of the same kind of disillusion with their rulers that they felt in Germany then. Disillusion, if it lasts long enough, turns in the end to hatred. In Germany hatred became concentrated on what was known as *das System*, by which was meant a parliamentary and constitutional régime which had totally lost touch with the real needs and lives of the people.

It is not an exaggeration to say that something of the same kind is beginning to happen in this country, though here there is the enormous difference that six million unemployed are not in the streets. But certainly nothing could do more to stimulate such feelings, after weeks in which the people of Britain had been warned of the crisis which threatened them, of the heavy sacrifices which would be demanded of them, of the imperative need for a doubling of all their energies ("To work, islanders!"), than the spectacle of Mr. Wilson flying off on a perfectly ridiculous visit to Moscow in an equally ridiculous fur hat, while at home the Labour Party was absorbed and obsessed by its domestic squabbles. At such moments people begin to wonder whether their rulers are serious men at all, and when they begin to ask such questions there is no knowing where they will end.

A week ago I went to the theatre. The play, which was a perfectly ordinary comedy-thriller, with no pretences to political satire, ended quite irrelevantly with a parody of the Prime Minister speaking on television. It was an immense success and brought the curtain happily down to the laughter and applause of the house. I thought that in my experience no Prime Minister had ever fallen so low in public esteem that the mere idea of his voice and presence was sufficient to provoke good-humoured and contemptuous laughter.

★

Malcolm Muggeridge's resignation as Rector of Edinburgh University has served quite a number of useful purposes. It has emphasised the absurdity of a Rector's position, which allows popular comedians like Mr. Muggeridge and "Professor" Jimmy Edwards to take a hand in the important business of running a university. It has illustrated the total idiocy of the students in electing them, if they wish their views to be adequately represented. And it has called attention to some aspects of the constitution of our universities which are totally at variance with the purpose for which they were founded. Mr. Muggeridge was quite right to think that if his position as Rector were to be taken seriously, it was time to get out; it would have been better if he had not lent himself to the farce at all.

As always in these islands, in the dispute between the Rector and the students matters of form became inextricably confused with matters of substance. The students, or their representatives, claimed that the Rector should act as their strictly mandated representative on the University Council. Mr. Muggeridge quite rightly resisted such a view, especially since the students had made it all the more unacceptable by associating it with the demand that the Rector should sponsor their request for the provision of contraceptives as part of the facilities offered by the universities.

On the face of it, such a request will seem to many people totally unreasonable. What has

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the provision of contraceptives to do with the purposes for which universities are founded? But then, what have playing fields, or swimming pools, or any of the other social and recreational facilities which we have come to regard as an essential part of university life? If for many students sex has become one recreation among others, as much a part of the *mens sana in corpore sano* as rugby football or lacrosse, who are the university authorities to deny it? That is, of course, unless they profess to impose not merely academic standards but certain moral ones as well, which may be totally unacceptable to the majority of their students.

For the Rector such doubts did not arise. To him, the Pill is more dangerous than the Bomb, even though, on the face of it, the dangers of each would seem to be of a quite different order and hardly commensurable; the Pill is a device of the Evil One, a kind of spiritual Bomb, and to ask him to have anything to do with promoting it is like asking him to assist in a nuclear holocaust.

Fortunately for him Mr. Muggeridge is not responsible for running a university. Otherwise he might perhaps have recognised that in demanding the Pill the students were raising a question which universities are finding it more and more difficult to answer. For given the sexual *mores* of the young today, the universities, in bringing together thousands of young men and women in what is practically a closed community, are creating an environment in which students are exposed, not so much to the spiritual dangers feared by Mr. Muggeridge, but to quite practical dangers which threaten not their souls but their academic careers; in particular, in the case of women students, there is the danger of unwanted pregnancy, to which a numerically significant proportion succumb at the present time.

I am glad that neither Mr. Muggeridge nor myself is responsible for solving this kind of problem; Mr. Muggeridge because I think he would solve it in the wrong way, and myself because I should have great difficulty in deciding what ought to be done. My instincts, which in these matters are egalitarian, tell me that in this particular respect no more and no less should be done for students than for anyone else, and that they are no less and no more responsible for themselves than we all are. But reason would tell me that where thousands of young people are concentrated in a single institution, this may create special problems which require special treatment, particularly because, at the present time, a broken academic career also involves a significant waste of the taxpayers' money.

At Edinburgh they seem to me to have solved this dilemma very neatly by an ingenious display of what might be called academic schizophrenia. The Vice-Chancellor has spoken strongly and firmly in support of the ex-Rector and sternly reproved the students for the impossible position in which they placed him. Such speeches are required of Vice-Chancellors to protect the reputation of their universities, allay the quite legitimate fears of parents, and appease University Councils and would-be benefactors, who in these matters tend to be conservative (particularly in the Celtic fringe). The Vice-Principal, however, with the support of some of his professional colleagues, has been active in assisting in the establishment, in the city of Edinburgh, of one of the admirable clinics administered by the Brook Advisory Centre, whose purpose is to advise and assist young people under twenty-five in birth control and in their sexual and emotional problems. I hope I am not suggesting that there was anything deliberate in this division of responsibility; rather it seems to be simply a case of everything, even contradiction, working together for good.

But *l'affaire Muggeridge* is only a small and rather special case of a much more general movement of student revolt which may in the end transform all our ideas of what a university is or ought to be. To other ideas which stimulate the young, to Black Power, to Flower Power, we must add Student Power. The force of the idea shows itself in Peking as in San Francisco, in Prague as in Berlin, in London as in Edinburgh, only abroad it takes far more violent and radical forms than it has hitherto here. Even in revolt, the British remain an empirical lot, who like to concentrate on a particular issue, like the Pill, or the appointment of a Director of the London School of Economics, even though the underlying implications may be the same as those which are spoken openly elsewhere. In each particular case, there is an almost unlimited generality of protest which is almost impossible to satisfy by even the most thoroughgoing concessions.

Indeed, in many cases, concessions are precisely what militant students do not want, because they tend to blunt the sharpness of their conflicts with authority. One might take an example from what has happened recently in the United States, at San Francisco State College, an institution which numbers about 20,000 students. There the object, and victim, of student protest has been its liberal-minded President, who has now been given notice by the College trustees. When the students boy-

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cotted the campus cafeteria, the President supported them. When they attacked collaboration between the college and the draft boards, the President was on their side. Such permissiveness only exasperated the students; what they wanted was an occasion which would provoke a direct confrontation between them and the Police, the State, and Governor Ronald Reagan. In December, the radical *SDS* (Students for a Democratic Society) and the Black Students Union stormed the administration building, covered its walls with obscenities, looted the student-owned campus bookshop and tried to sack the college library. The President again refused to summon the police. For this, he was subjected to a kind of Star Chamber procedure by the college governors, who relieved him of his discretionary powers to suspend students and summon State police to the campus.

Such an incident illustrates very clearly the anarchic and nihilist impulses which lie behind many forms of student protest; a detached observer may wonder why books especially seemed to have been the object of their anger. One may find the same kind of impulses even more clearly at work in the radical student movement in the West German universities, and particularly the Free University of West Berlin. The Free University, founded after the war when the historic Humboldt University in East Berlin fell under Communist control, has as its very *raison d'être* the removal from academic life of all forms of authoritarianism, both of the Communist and the traditional Prussian variety; it probably allows a greater degree of student participation in the administration than any other university in the world. There again, however, student militancy has led to conflict not only with the university but the municipal authorities, and with the police, in street demonstrations which have amounted to pitched battles. There, too, the administration has found itself baffled in its efforts to meet student demands because they signify total rejection, not only of its own supervisory and disciplinary powers, but of the State itself and the culture it embodies. And there also, one finds the slightly sinister omen that the sharpest edge of student revolt is turned against the liberal forces which aim at moderating the conflict.

How does one explain, in an age which has seen the greatest multiplication and expansion of universities since the Middle Ages, this widespread revulsion of students against the society of which they are the beneficiaries? Is it fanciful to suggest that this is a kind of doom which the universities have brought upon themselves? The more they have betrayed the ideal of a voluntary association of teachers and taught in the disinterested pursuit of knowledge and learning, the more they have approximated to the model of educational factories designed to supply the State with the precise annual quotas of scientists, technologists, managers and administrators which it requires. Thereby they have increasingly identified themselves with the aims and objects of governments which, in the eyes of many of the young, are morally corrupt, and have sacrificed their only true claim on the love, affection and devotion of their students. It is significant that the demands of the radical German student leader Rudi Dutschke, so far as they can be precisely formulated at all, are directed at the creation of universities which shall be totally free, self-governing communes, on a Fourierist or Tolstoyan model, which reject the corrupt democracy of bourgeois capitalism. Marx thought that the factory would be the breeding-ground of revolution. How strange it would be if, in the modern state, it was the university which took over this function. . . .

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James Mill's India

By John Kenneth Galbraith

WITH *A Pilgrim's Progress* and possibly *The Education of Henry Adams*, James Mill's *The History of British India* must be one of the most famous unread books in the English language. Everyone knows he was working on it while he was rearing and educating his more famous son, and it is intimately a part of the legend of John Stuart Mill. Many, reading of the Mills, must have thought it a work they might one day read. For a long while few have.

Partly this has been because of inaccessibility: the available editions have been on deep library shelves. A new edition about to be reprinted with annotation by Horace Hayman Wilson dates from the 1850s, and the original was in a type well designed to try the eyes. The ample and important footnotes were all but microscopic; and, of course, it is a work of formidable length and thoroughness. It is not for the person who wants to read and run.

In recent times, also, it has fallen under the heavy cloud which covers colonialism. Right-thinking men disapprove of colonialism; accordingly, they do not much read or write its history. This would be a very poor time to bring out the definitive work on the Belgians in the Congo or on the French in Senegal. All of this is unfortunate and a very poor reason for ignoring this classic of British and Indian history.

In the first place, it is a great piece of English prose. It is not an easy book but it is stylish and lucid. It draws on what may well have been the richest scholarship of the day—James Mill's enormous erudition was divided, one imagines, more or less equally between his famous book and his famous son. And there are passages whose organ tones are worthy of Gibbon or Macaulay and which all but put Churchill to shame. Consider these early paragraphs.

> From the time when Vasco de Gama distinguished his nation by discovering the passage round the Cape of Good Hope, a whole century had elapsed, during which, without a rival, the Portuguese had enjoyed, and abused, the advantages of superior knowledge and art, amid a feeble and half-civilised people. They had explored the Indian Ocean, as far as Japan; had discovered its islands, rich with some of the favourite productions of nature; had achieved the most brilliant conquests; and, by their commerce, poured into Europe, in unexampled profusion, those commodities of the East, on which the nations at that time set an extraordinary value.
>
> The circumstances of this splendid fortune had violently attracted the attention of Europe. The commerce of India, even when confined to those narrow limits which a carriage by land had prescribed, was supposed to have elevated feeble states into great ones; and to have constituted an enviable part in the fortune even of the most opulent and powerful; to have contributed largely to support the Grecian monarchies both in Syria and Egypt; to have retarded the downfall of Constantinople; and to have raised the small and obscure republic of Venice to the rank and influence of the most potent kingdoms. The discovery therefore of a new channel for this opulent traffic, and the happy experience of the Portuguese, inflamed the cupidity of all the maritime nations of Europe, and set before them the most tempting prospects.

One wonders how anyone, in a matter of five sentences, could more successfully have conveyed the excitement and the sense of high drama with which the great trading adventures on the Indies were launched.

British rule in India is also one of the greatest achievements of the last three hundred years. The attitudes which make it, for the moment,

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an unfashionable subject of study and interest will pass. And this will be true in India as elsewhere. The British succeeded the Moghul dynasty—that of Babur, Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan which established itself in India from central Asia upon the defeat of Ibrahim Lodi (also a member of an alien dynasty) at Panipat in 1526. The Indians have now adopted the Moghuls as their own. Although they did not, as did their predecessors, exchange their old kingdom for the new, British Administration was a model of compassion and concern for the masses as compared with the despotism and anarchy it replaced. Without forgetting the excesses of Clive and his contemporaries in Bengal, in most of India the British were unquestionably regarded as liberators. To this day what was British India is appreciably more prosperous than those parts that remained under the rule of the princes. But independence was won in India as elsewhere by cultivating animosity against the imperial power; and there was much snobbishness, insult and indignity to nourish it. This is remembered. But in time these memories will fade and the accomplishments will be featured.

THESE ACCOMPLISHMENTS were great. British rule in India was, first of all, an extraordinary exercise in the art of administration. A mere handful of men—the Indian Civil Service (ICS) never had more than eleven hundred European members—carried the responsibility for government with the support of a few regiments of British and a rather larger number of Indian troops. This was brought about by selecting men carefully, impressing them with the importance of their task, paying them well and then giving them large responsibility and the commensurate authority. Not only were the collection of revenue, the maintenance of order and the administration of justice in the hand of the Collector (the regional administrator) but when famine threatened or Muslims and Hindus clashed in the villages the problem was his. Youngsters in their twenties governed hundreds of thousands of people. They did so within a stern framework of law; and while there were doubtless petty tyrants and perhaps a very few thieves, nearly all were honest, dedicated and rather austere men. Certainly they were the best rulers India had ever had. Many gave their lives. It is a common observation on British rule that it did very little—it was law-and-order government and nothing more. This is unjust. It irrigated vast areas against the threat of famine and built a comprehensive railway system to get the food from the places of surplus to those of deficit. It began to build an educational system and it provided the other conventional services of nineteenth-century governments. At the time not many other governments did more and few others did as much as well. It was not democratic. But democratic government at the time might have been worse or more likely impossible. This was the best of despotisms.

British rule in the nineteenth century was much better on the whole than in the eighteenth century. James Mill's *India* is the basic document on eighteenth-century administration; it was also influential in what happened in the next period, for Mill's criticisms of British administration, enumerated here in detail, were influential in reforms that followed. And so was Mill himself, for one consequence of the book was his employment by the company in which —as I shall note presently—he came to have an influential role. This was also the book that the diligent read as they prepared for examinations; or to take ship for the subcontinent; or which they read during the course of the long journey there. These latter uses were of mixed advantage, and of adverse consequences of this book note must also be made.

HOWEVER erudite he might be, James Mill had some serious shortcomings when it came to writing about the civilisation of India. For one thing he never set foot in the country of which he wrote at such length. In the preface he argues that this was an advantage; had he visited India he could have seen only a small corner of that vast land and for this he would have sacrificed his larger view. This is defensive pleading without doubt. It would have been a warmer, more sympathetic book had Mill seen something of Indian civilisation for himself. Also Mill did not know the relevant Indian languages, and translations at the beginning of the nineteenth century were much less commonly available than now. He excuses himself on this but he would not have excused any man who assayed to comment on the Greek or Latin poets without a knowledge of Greek or Latin. He discusses the *Mahabharata* under this handicap and the further and more serious one that, at the time, it had not been rendered into English.

He had two other faults. To this day men regularly return from India in one of two extreme states of mind. Either they are enraptured by everything Indian, or they wish to see nothing again of the country and its sloth and misery. So it was also in Mill's time and without having been to India, Mill threw in his lot enthusiastically with the second party. He was determined to show that Indian culture is barren, perverse, and objectionable and he was determined to prove this to be so in all par-

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ticulars. He made clear his suspicion of those who confessed their admiration. Their scholarly credentials and good sense were in doubt. Nor did he allow understatement to conceal his dislike of everything Indian. "The Brahmins," he advised, "are the most audacious, and perhaps the most unskilful fabricators, with whom the annals of fable have made us acquainted." Taking issue with admirers on a less exalted manner, he observed:

> From the frequency with which the Hindus perform religious ablutions, the European, prone from partial appearances to draw flattering conclusions, painted them, at first, as in the colours of so many other virtues, so likewise in those of cleanliness. Few nations are surpassed by the Hindus, in the total want of physical purity, in their streets, houses, and persons.

More than simple bias is involved here. Mill was the prophet of a faith which made it difficult, perhaps impossible, for him to understand the civilisation of India. He was a Benthamite and not for one season or one country. If a man's moral worth was measured by the practical utility of his actions in England, so it was in India. If one tested policy by the greatest good for the greatest number in Europe, so also among the masses of Asia. If one realised the greatest good by competitive individualism in one place, so in the other. And by these tests there was little in the indigenous culture of India that passed. As one measured government in Westminster so in the capital of the Nizam or Nabob. Caste, accommodation to the hot climate, the conservatism of an agricultural economy, the social customs of the villages, the inherently predatory character of landlords and rulers were all outside the range of Mill's faith and hence unworthy of any effort at comprehension.

NOR CAN EVERYTHING be blamed on utilitarianism. Mill also had a tendency remarkable even in an Englishman or Scotsman of his time to measure religion, marriage customs, manners, even the personal hygiene mentioned above by his own standards. No carefully nurtured sense of humility kept him from knowing what was right. And his education notwithstanding, Mill was in many ways a very narrow man. He was a fine writer; accordingly, one must grant him a feeling for the graces of English and classical prose and verse. This apart, he must have been nearly devoid of aesthetic sense. In consequence the magic of Indian temple architecture and sculpture escapes him entirely; and so does the art and architecture of the rulers. Nominally Mill's bias is directed against the Hindus but in practice it embraces also the ruling Muslim dynasties. The last of these, the Moghuls, were among the greatest patrons of architecture and painting the world has known and one, Shah Jahan, who built, along with much else, the Taj Mahal and the Red Fort in Delhi and supported one of the world's great schools of painters, is rivalled only by the Medicis. None of these achievements, were they known to Mill, were deemed worthy of more than passing mention. Most are not mentioned.

WHAT REDEEMS these faults? In the first place only a comparatively small part of the book is about Indian India. Most of it is about British India and here Mill's Benthamite faith coupled with his uncompromising honesty and candour are not handicaps but advantages. He judges British rule in India by the standards of the time and he judges it with all of the moral authority and certainty of a man of belief. Nothing is more sacred than his own convictions; one cannot imagine that many were spared. A few years before Mill wrote, affairs in the Kingdom of Oudh (the important state centered on Lucknow on the Ganges plain) being in their typically shocking condition, the then Governor-General, Sir John Shore, evicted the ruler who had but recently succeeded to the throne. The mismanagement of affairs was a highly co-operative enterprise in which many participated but the Governor-General had been persuaded that the Nabob was the focus of the trouble. Mill tells as follows of the background of the action.

> Great industry and skill had been employed in prepossessing the mind of the Governor-General with the most unfavourable opinion of the young Nabob, as a man between whose character and the interests of the English an irreconcilable contrariety was placed.

He then goes on to describe the means by which the ruler was deposed. It was accepted by all that he was the son of the old Nabob and a menial woman of the seraglio. But he had been acknowledged by his father and under Muslim custom and law this was sufficient. But now it was further held that his mother went home at night to a husband and that he had been purchased unborn for five hundred rupees as a putative son by the old Nabob who felt himself insufficiently supplied with progeny. Contemplating this transaction Mill, in a fine concluding passage, attributes innocence, stupidity and injustice to the exalted British official without pausing for breath.

> It is impossible to read the account of this transaction, drawn up by the Governor-General, and

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> not to be impressed with a conviction of his sincerity, and his desire to do justice. But it is easy to perceive also how much his understanding was bewildered; and impossible not to confess that he decided against the unfortunate Nabob the great question of a kingdom, upon evidence upon which a court of English law would not have decided against him a question of a few pounds.

Standards that might be meaningless or even bigoted when brought to bear on Hindus and Muslims were not at all bad for judging the conduct of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Englishmen.

The other redeeming feature in this edition is Mill's editor, Horace Hayman Wilson, who also continued the history from where Mill had left it. A distinguished orientalist and Professor at Oxford, Wilson was as persuaded of the depth and subtlety of Indian culture as was Mill of its sterility. And while he is not without respect for Mill in his particular areas of competence, Wilson did not believe that these extended to oriental languages, literature, art, manners, philosophy and religion. He not only felt obliged to correct Mill in these matters but, as any reader of his comments will quickly sense, rejoiced in the opportunity.

THE CONSEQUENCE, and one of the more remarkable features of this book, is that we have not only Mill's views on India but the vigorous opposing views of his editor. The latter are not less important than the former. They reflect on the whole, a far more rational, sympathetic, modern and generally adequate view of Indian civilisation. Until he is well into the history of the British in India no one should neglect the footnotes in this book marked "W." Wilson's labour in correcting Mill, and particularly in correcting his narrow and jaundiced view of Indian culture, was an exceedingly important contribution both to scholarship and to politics and imperial administration. For no one could wish that Mill's word on these matters should go unchallenged.

LET ME NOW say a word about the author.[1] James Mill was born in 1773 near Montrose in Scotland of poor parents—his father was a cobbler and a small landholder. But though poor his parents were ambitious for their son and his mother in particular determined that he should have a good education. After attending local schools he went to the University of Edinburgh under the patronage of Sir John and Lady Jane Stuart with whom he is assumed to have lived more or less as a member of the family. It was in Edinburgh that he began to develop what was to be his enduring passion for the Greeks. It was his intention to prepare for the Church, not from any known interest in its work but because it was an accepted means of social and economic advance by impoverished Scotch youth at the time as for many years thereafter. He served as an itinerant preacher for a time but in 1802 abandoned this vocation and went to London with Sir John Stuart.

Mill's early years in London were less than happy. Initially he practised journalism, became editor of two literary journals, did a translation and began his career as an essayist. But before long he had sufficient income to contemplate marriage and therewith his life took a sharp turn for the worse. He ignored and probably disliked his wife although this did not prevent him from having nine children by her of whom John Stuart, named for his patron, was the oldest. The burden of providing for this vast brood darkened the middle years of Mill's life and, presumably, affirmed his agreement with his friend Thomas Malthus on the dangers of over-population. It was intensified because after 1805 he gave up his other regular source of income to concentrate on the present history. He expected, when beginning the work, to complete it in three or four years. It took twelve. He sustained himself and his family during these years with miscellaneous journalism, editing, translations and hack literary work. He also in these years produced, among other more substantial works, his notable pamphlet, *Commerce Defended*, in which he strongly attacked the notion that the economic interests of the nation are safeguarded by the land-owning classes, a position which was sharply at odds with earlier and more tolerant attitudes toward the landlords.

As work on *The History of British India* continued, a new and powerful influence entered Mill's life in the form of Jeremy Bentham. This association began in 1808 and was in every respect symbiotic. Mill was audience, editor, and exponent of Bentham's ideas. Bentham found in Mill an avid disciple for his doctrines, one whose mind was extensively prepared by his own reading and thought. To further the association Bentham bought a house for Mill and his family not far from his own and helped him with the rent. They went together to the country and in 1814 had their first quarrel over Mill's evident preference for the company of Joseph Hume.

[1] For a more detailed biographical sketch, on which I have drawn here, see *James Mill: Selected Economic Writings* (edited by Donald Winsch, University of Chicago Press, 1966). This in turn draws on Alexander Bain's biography, *James Mill: A Biography* (1882).

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The present history was finished in 1818, at about the time when the association with Bentham was coming gradually to an end. The book brought a sharp change in Mill's life for, its criticism of British government in India notwithstanding, it led to his employment by the East India Company. The Company paid him well and Mill rose rapidly in its service. His financial problems came to an end; by 1821 his salary was £1,000 a year and he was able to consider himself quite rich. Though his responsibilities were considerable he was able to discharge them in six hours of work a day. In the remainder of his time he engaged in a wide range of discussions on the problems of the day, wrote and revised his *The Elements of Political Economy* (1821) and contributed his notable injunctions to public virtue as defined by himself to the *Westminster Review*. During these years he saw also coming to maturity the most notable achievement of his life, one for which, with some reason, he took full credit, namely his son John Stuart Mill. His son (with mellower wisdom) succeeded him not only as political economist and utilitarian philosopher but also in employment at India House. James Mill died in 1836.

ONE WILL ASK what is the meaning of this book for modern India—or for modern India and Pakistan. It is, without wishing to exaggerate, very great. Both of these lands are profoundly Asian; it was a measure of the power as well as the quality of their culture that it kept its character and integrity through two centuries of strong British rule. India, as Gandhi insisted, is to be found in its villages. I do not suppose that a transmigratory visitor returning to a village in Bihar or Orissa after an absence of a thousand years would find much that had changed. But there is also a superstructure that is immensely British. I have mentioned the Civil Service. The parliament, police, law courts, the army, universities, the newspapers and the industrial and commercial life are all profoundly according to the British model. This book is a chronicle, possibly the best we have, of the transplant of this model. It is not only an admirable and even unique document on economic, political and cultural imperialism, but it is the early history of the institutions of government, education and economic life that are most conspicuous to the visitor in India to this day.

The book has another high relevance. People often asked me what book they should read before going to India. I always suggest E. M. Forster's *Passage to India*. If one knows this great novel, nothing about the subcontinent comes as a surprise. It pictures as no other the clash of the two cultures and the uncertainty and ambiguity of the life of those who live between the two. It is the thing which continues to impress one after a long stay in India. Indian society exists between the two worlds and has the insecurity which comes from an uncertain identification with each. So does Indian administration. So does Indian diplomacy. So also her approach to economic development and modern technical achievement. When the Japanese adopt they adopt—confidently and fearlessly. So one senses do the Chinese. But India is far more likely to remain in suspense.

Mill, I think, provides the clue. The Japanese could select as could the Chinese. Economic organisation, technology, the industrial ethic were taken over completely. Language, art, other culture, social and family life could remain in the traditional mould. But in India the powerful and dominating culture of which Mill was such a superb and supremely confident exponent offered much less choice. Benthamite concepts of government and economics were believed to be the natural order of things. So were English manners, English ethics, English social customs, even English food. So, of course, was the English language itself. It was not so much that they were imposed as that their superiority was taken for granted.

Having to adopt much, the Indians adopted fearfully and often rather badly. They wished to conform, but they sought also to stay apart. Here in this great book we see, in marvellous panoply, how great was the task. Accordingly, we see the sources of the insecurity which Forster so wonderfully evokes. We see why today Indians often seem more Westernised than they are. We see the sources of the underlying commitment of traditional attitudes and values which the visitor—the modern engineer, agronomist, politician—is so often so disconcerted to discover in what he thought were wholly Westernised, wholly modern men. We see here the reasons that Europeans and Americans often find Indians, as they say, difficult. They are unprepared for an underlying commitment to a traditional culture for which, in other Asian countries, they would be wholly braced. The story of the tasks which eighteenth-century Englishmen took on in India in all their variety and complexity will carry the reader through Mill's book for it is rich in interest itself. But in getting the measure of the imperial task one wins an understanding, as a result, of the psychology and behaviour of modern India or, more precisely, of behaviour and thought in that thin but dominant stratum of Indian society which was juxtoposed to the *Raj*.

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THEATRE

Pinter Translated

On International Non-communication — By MARTIN ESSLIN

SO THE WORLD is getting steadily smaller, and anyone who has anything to say, who is a success in London or New York, has his books translated, his plays performed from Stockholm to Naples, from Brussels to Prague and Bucarest, if not to Vladivostok. Translations roll off the assembly lines like mass-produced vehicles. Yet how much do they convey of the originals? And are they of any use in making "nation understand nation"?

I was recently compelled to read the German versions of Harold Pinter's plays, all of which have been performed in theatres up and down Western Germany. One does not often read an author in other languages if one can read him in the original. Hence my surprise at entering the strange world of Bottom's dream (*Thou art translated!*). In that enchanted wood howlers grow upon the trees in wild profusion.

In *The Birthday Party*, for example, the two terrorists (Goldberg and McCann) brainwash their victim (Stanley), by hurling all sorts of accusations at him—from "You contaminate womankind!" to "You are a traitor to the cloth!" One of their more devastating questions is "Who watered the wicket at Melbourne?" And how does this reference to the British national sport fare in German? *"Wer hat an das Stadttor von Melbourne gepinkelt?"* Which translated back into English reads: *"Who peed against the city gate of Melbourne?"* And how was this startling transformation of one sentence into another achieved? We can follow the trend of thought. Look up "wicket" in the Dictionary—it will lead to "wicket gate." "Gate" at Melbourne? Must be the gate of the city. Aha! And "to water" then becomes almost obvious in its meaning....

Now, one howler of this sort would make little difference—although Pinter's range of references in these accusations constitutes the dramatic point. Stanley is being accused of violating every possible law: even the laws of fair play and cricket. But when a considerable number of this long sequence of only *seemingly* nonsensical sentences turns out to have been misunderstood, the basic idea of the scene simply disappears. "What about *Drogheda*?" asks the Irishman McCann, thereby also fixing the blame for Cromwell's massacre of the garrison and priests of that beleaguered town on our poor little Englishman. The German version of the sentence is: *"Was ist mit Staerkungsmitteln?"* (What about fortifying tablets or drugs?) How the learned translator reached this result boggles the imagination. My guess would be that he merely assumed there must be some affinity between *Drogheda* and the German word *"Droge"*—drug. "What about the Albigensenist heresy?" ask the terrorists, and clearly the stress is on *heresy*. *"Was ist mit der Albigensenisten-Legende?"* says the German translation. The heresy has become a mere legend. Why? Did the translator misread the word heresy which he did not know for the word "hearsay" which he did? Similarly, the statement: "You're a traitor to the cloth" becomes: *"Sie sind ein Verraeter bis aufs Mark"* (You are a traitor to the marrow of your bones). Was the translator thinking of the cloth of Stanley's underclothes?

Is it really coyness that makes McCann's threat "I'll kick the shite out of him!" into no more than: *"Ich werde ihm den Schaedel zu Brei schlagen"* (I'll smash his head to pulp). And all these renderings can be found within a few pages of the text which I have picked at random: admittedly, a difficult text, with many recondite allusions.

BUT THEN there are howlers in much simpler passages. A few pages further on Goldberg is telling the story of his youth: "I was very proud of my old greenhouse...." In German: *"Ich war sehr stolz auf mein Haus im Gruenen ..."* (I was very proud of my house in the greenbelt). Or, in another passage of Goldberg's nostalgic musings: "Humming away I'd be, past the children's playground. I'd tip my hat to the toddlers." The last sentence becomes in the

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German version: *"Ich habe jeden Hausierer gegruesst . . ."* (*i.e.*: I greeted every *pedlar*).

McCann sings a sentimental Irish melody:

Oh the garden of Eden has vanished, they say,
But I know the lie of it still. . . .

In German he makes a much more drastic statement:

O, fuer uns ist verloren das Paradies
so heisst es—
doch ich weiss, das ist eine Luege. . . .

O Paradise is lost they say,
But I know that is a lie. . . .

One last gem from the third act of *The Birthday Party*. Here Stanley, who has already been brainwashed, is subjected to a final orgy of intimidation. Goldberg and McCann hurl a list of phrases associated with illness and hospitals at him ("the stomach pump," "the oxygen tent"), and this also includes obvious references to the bones in his body which they are prepared to break—"the crutches" and "the plaster of Paris." The latter phrase in German has become: "*Das Pflaster von Paris*" or "the pavements of Paris. . . ."

IT IS ONE OF the great difficulties of any reasoned review of a translation that the critic is sorely tempted to pick out the more outrageously funny and extravagant mistakes. They alone, one feels, will be amusing enough to keep the interest of readers who don't know both languages. To make a list of the more humdrum, less funny mistranslations which abound in the German version of Pinter would be very boring. Yet these small mistakes, being so numerous, are probably even more damaging. "Up till now" becomes "since then," "jam tart" turns into "Sauce Tartare," "anchovies" reappear as "aniseed-cakes" and, in the end, the flavour of the passage is as alien from the original as indeed jam tarts are from sauce tartare. "A bloody liberty!"—that archetypal phrase of Pinteresque speech—reappears in *The Dumb Waiter* as *"Eine beschissene Freiheit!"* (*i.e.*, "a shit-covered freedom"). And *Freiheit* means political freedom—it cannot mean "impertinence"—which in German is *"Frechheit,"* (a similar but very different word). Whole passages suffer such strange sea-changes. Also in *The Dumb Waiter* one of the two hired murderers (Gus) complains about the difficulty of killing women.

> They don't seem to hold together like men, women. A looser texture, like. Didn't she spread, eh? She didn't half spread. . . .

The German version has Gus say:

> *Die koennen sich eben nicht so zusammennehmen wie Maenner, Frauen. Weicheres Material, wahrscheinlich. Und was sie zusammengefaselt hat, was? Schoen was zurechtgefaselt. . . .*

> They can't pull themselves together like men, women. Softer material, probably. And the nonsense she talked, eh? Talked proper nonsense. . . .

The Dictionary probably indicated: *"to spread oneself . . . to talk at great length."*

In *The Caretaker* Mick is talking about a man who resembled the tramp Davies.

> Had a funny habit of carrying his fiddle on his back, like a papoose. I think there was a bit of the Red Indian in him.

In the German version this man carries his fiddle on his back like *eine Schildkroete* (a tortoise). To get this result you not only have to confuse *papoose* with *porpoise* but then to confound *porpoise* with *tortoise*! Does Mick own the house where the play takes place? "I got deeds to prove it," he says in Pinter's text. In German he exclaims: *"Ich habe es durch Taten bewiesen"* (I have proved it by my deeds). And Mick has plans for the property: "I could turn this place into a penthouse." He is somewhat less ambitious in German: *"Ich koennte aus diesem House eine Pension machen"* (I could turn this house into a *boarding-house*).

YES, TRANSLATION is a difficult business: you have to know the two languages, and the topography and the ways of life in question and the two cultures. Pinter's German translator thinks that a "detached house" (in *The Lover*) means *"ein abgelegenes Haus"* (a remote house). He makes Davies refer to that well-known sports arena as the *Kensington* Oval. He thinks that *The Nag's Head* is the name of an English city or village; and "up near the Scrubs" becomes *"oben am Park"* (up at the Park). Scrubs —shrubs—greenery—park: was it a process of simple deduction? But then English gardens do have their pitfalls. "She's a common or garden slut" (in *The Lover*) turns into the far more graphic phrase: *"Eine ganz alltaegliche oder sogenannte Parkbank-Hure"* (a quite ordinary or so-called park-bench whore). Here the English cliché has literally fired the translator's creative imagination. Again, I am afraid, I have been unable to resist the lure of gaining easy smiles by parading the more outrageous type of howler.

The really serious deficiency of these translations lies elsewhere. The point of Pinter is, to a considerable extent, his brilliant use of different levels of language. The vocabulary of the articulate is comically juxtaposed with that of

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the totally inarticulate, the way educated people use words with the gropings of the half-educated. A translator who is unable to see even the dictionary meaning of so many terms, could not possibly grasp the higher linguistic level. Had he understood it, it would still have been very difficult to find an adequate rendering of these subtleties in German. Only a writer of considerable talent might accomplish that. Yet it could be done.

There is a third and even more elevated level of Pinter's linguistic skill—his use of rhythms and pauses: and his poetic ambiguity. That these are beyond the grasp of someone still lost in the difficulties of some Beginner's Course of English is only too obvious. Neither the social comedy of language in Pinter nor Pinter's poetic use of cadence and pause appears in the German version of the plays. What remains is something of the plot, something of the characters as revealed by their actions rather than their words. And that is precious little.

OH THE PARADOX of the cultural exchange in our time! These plays are stubbornly performed in German, and only *der liebe Gott* knows what actors and producers think they are about. The majority of German critics keep on wondering what these strange primitive plays could mean. But such is the prestige of the mere fact of success in London or New York that they also feel compelled to report that, after all, these are very *strange* plays, mysterious, disjointed, enigmatic. Surely there must be *something* there?

So after all, the British, who simply ignore the bulk of foreign literature—and who reject even a poet like Brecht if the translations they are offered do not seem great poetry to them—may be far, far wiser than the compulsively cosmopolitan Germans. Moreover, the British admit that they are not much good at foreigners' languages. The Germans tend to claim that all educated people in Germany *do* know foreign languages well (and, above all, English). And yet—translations of a major dramatist like Pinter which are so full of the most elementary mistakes are commissioned by agents, printed by publishers, performed by theatres, accepted by audiences, without anyone pointing to the errors, or making a fuss about them. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing; to think that one knows a language well can be a very dangerous illusion. After all, whole wars have started over linguistic misunderstandings.

My Father Fought Their War for Four Years

My father fought their war for four years
And he didn't hate his enemies or love them.
But I know, that even there
He formed me daily out of his little calms
So rare; he gathered them out of the bombs
And the smoke,
And he put them in his frayed knapsack
With the last bite of his mother's hardening cake.

And with his eyes he gathered nameless dead,
He gathered many dead on my behalf,
So that I will know them in his look and love them.

And not die, like them, in horror . . .

And he filled his eyes with them in vain:

I go out to all my wars.

Yehuda Amichai
Translated by Assia Gutman

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ART

At the Louvre with STEINBERG

By Pierre Schneider

I WAS PREPARING to face, not without feelings of guilt, the usual objections: "I am an artist, you know. Talk isn't my forte. Besides, what can you say about it? Like mystic experience, aesthetic experience cannot be explained...." In no time, Steinberg reassures me:

"I am wary of people who remain dazzled, exalted, silent in front of a painting. They believe in miracles. But it is we who must make our paradises. The true mystics have always been talkative. To honour a picture, you must tell it to yourself with every possible detail. When you freeze up, you know that you are standing before a boss."

Silence is the consequence of fear, and Steinberg hates tyranny.

"Art is a sphinx. The beauty of the sphinx is that you yourself must do the interpreting. When you have found an interpretation, you are already cured. The mistake people make is to believe that the sphinx can give only one answer. Actually, it gives hundreds of answers, or maybe none at all. Interpretation probably does not give us the truth, but the act of interpretation saves us."

The word brings salvation. And, no doubt, it is to the essential role of the word that we may attribute Steinberg's avocation:

"I am a writer. I draw because the essence of a good piece of writing is precision. Drawing is a precise mode of expression."

Indeed, caricature is not a purely visual medium but rather the most visual form that thought, language, are capable of assuming. What distinguishes the draftsmanship of Goya from that of Daumier is function rather than talent. One looks at Goya; one reads Daumier. The taunt of literature does not frighten Steinberg.

"In art everything has a literary origin—except abstract expressionism, which pretended to grow out of the activity of the body, not out of thought. However, even action painting is the intelligence of the body. Anything that implies some sort of intelligence, of whatever kind, belongs at least partly to the realm of literature. The body's intelligence is the metaphysics of the nose."

Besides, all things speak.

"Everything has a message: even the smell of museums. In Europe, museums smell of town halls and grade schools; in America they smell like banks."

If in most cases we do not perceive these messages, it is because their richness is drowned out by a thunderous vacuousness, as the noise of traffic drowns conversation in sidewalk cafés.

"We spend almost our whole lives reading boisterous, ready-made messages (the mail, the newspapers, traffic lights). To decipher the other kind of messages requires an effort which we prefer to avoid making. Yet it is this effort that renders life rich, gay and so to say, inexhaustible."

Therefore, people must be encouraged to decipher these deeper messages. But how? Laziness, sloth, routine, impel them to read only the language that is familiar to them. One must use tricks. Let them proceed along the track, but tamper with the switches.

"One must build attractive traps."

Steinberg's drawings are like traffic lights signalling "You may cross now" on all sides at once: you confidently step off the curb—and are run over.

"Humour is a very good trap. Laughter disarms and opens the way for instinct. It is like hiccups, yawns. When you try to repress a yawn, it comes out of your ears. Yawning is animal criticism—dogs yawn. Laughter is mental or maybe mineral. Let's drop this subject. Trying

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to define humour is one of the definitions of humour."

This is particularly true when Steinberg manipulates the language used in the definition. The language is the same, all right, but it has been placed in a different context. Caricature, as practised by most humourists, fits the definition implicit in its etymology: it is loaded. As practised by Steinberg, caricature *unloads*; it frees language from its customary obligations. Its burden removed, language flies out the window and into the world of things. All that is needed is to mix up the established circuits between sign and sense. This man, whose drawings so often seek to upset communication, confesses: *"Without wanting to, I have become a moralist."*

At first sight, he has the modest and just a trifle doctoral air of a chemistry professor: yet there is something disquieting in the eyes, the smile, the cap. But after all, the chemistry professor might be on holiday in Europe. Such is obviously the opinion of the four schoolgirls who come to us as we are chatting in a room filled with Roman sculpture. At once, we are plunged into a typically Steinbergian predicament: faced with sounds that possess the obvious earmarks of language yet are impossible to understand. They are speaking Spanish. Little by little, we manage to reconstruct the question that they are absolutely convinced my companion will answer. Why are the eye-sockets in the colossal head of Antinous, Emperor Hadrian's favourite page, empty? Without hesitation, Steinberg explains that the eyes had been made of precious stones and that when the barbarians came.... There follows a gesture of legerdemain so precise and so swift that one would swear this innocent-looking gentleman had learned the pickpocket trade in the Trastevere.

WE BEGIN our visit to the Louvre with the Roman mosaics. *"The Battle of the Amazons,"* found at Daphne, near Antioch, dates from the third or fourth century A.D. Steinberg points to the central part, which is lost and has been filled in with cement: *"This empty space in the middle transforms the whole work into a geographical business. One can see how abstract art derives from the museum. It is there that one sees vertical floors. These gaps—how restful. That is why there are dull pages in all good novels. After this gap, the head of the dying soldier is much more moving: like an action taking place behind a bush. It is interesting to show only a little part of things: female eroticism...."*

He turns his glance to the horsemen on the left:

"How elegant these warriors are! In them, the artist is the passive instrument of a period style, of decadence, rococo.... But when he got to the horse's teeth, the resemblance between the marble cubes and the teeth made him into a dentist making a denture for a horse. Here the

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mosaic became a collage and a pun. The artist also realised that the whole mosaic was made of horse's teeth. Look: everything is abstract, derivative—the horse's nostrils, for instance—except those teeth. They are real teeth."

And now it looks as if some monstrous Pegasus had spat out, by the millions, the little cubes that compose the pavement on which we tread.

"Those horse's teeth, they are everywhere.... Once you see something, you can no longer get rid of it, you are contaminated, you see it everywhere. Right now you, I, everything is made of horse's teeth. Of course, it is my eye that is contaminated."

And this contamination is hailed as a symptom of life: by its contagiousness the microbe proves itself alive.

A bit later, in front of a mediocre Roman high-relief:

"I am very fond of high-reliefs. They lead to such absurdities! To make the sculpture from a rock, which already is a sculpture! It is absurd, amusing, moving. Sculptors are primarily idol makers. To translate flesh into stone, for instance, is to deify man. For a stone to be admitted into the temple—the museum—it has to have been translated into bronze. Bronze is the sublimation of stone, wood is the sublimation of iron, and so on. That, by the way, is the secret of pop art."

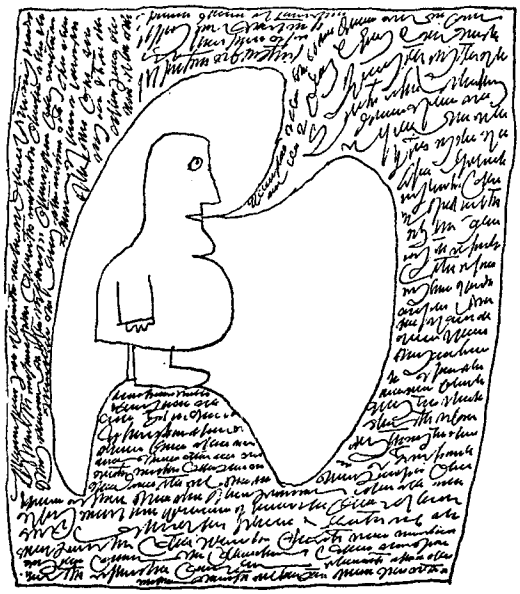
What fascinates Steinberg in Wayne Thiebaud's pop paintings, as in the horse's teeth of the Roman mosaic, is the coincidence, perfect to the point of coalescence, of "nature" and "art" by way of a simple, basic form. Here, the cube; there, the cuisine of creamy pigment. We can no longer tell whether the artist has caught nature or whether nature has caught up with him. Later, in front of Sellajo's *"Saint Jerome Penitent"*:

"Marvellous! See how the trees are trimmed. Architecture first imitated trees, then the trees imitated architecture. Campaniles and minarets were invented by cypress trees."

THE THEME OF a large number of Steinberg's own drawings is the unforeseen, upsetting, comic abolition of the distance between the artist and the world: the person drawing a table turns, without knowing it, into part of the table itself. The instrument of this trespass is the virulence of line, its ability to proliferate. Line is the common bond between man and things; the modulations of line constitute a language. And here it is necessary to take the word "literally" literally: the identity of human language and the language of things occurs at the level of the alphabet. The combination of letters draws them away from their origin and reality, turns them into envelopes of purely human sounds, into vehicles of abstract meanings. They no longer designate the world, they signify what the tyranny of man wishes them to signify. All's well, the words of a friend's letter tell you; but if you have the slightest knowledge of, or feeling for, graphology, you can easily detect the anxiety that lies behind his optimistic affirmations. Steinberg says:

"For me, seeing a work of art is, to some extent, a matter of graphology."

The man who hates all forms of despotism will seek to free the alphabet from its master, to deliver it from its semantic chains and turn it loose again in nature. When man and nature are analogous and continuous, writing means what it says. Writing is simply script: not so much signs as signatures (Steinberg's passion for signatures is well known), not an object of cognition but rather of recognition. The world is one—if we decipher the correspondences of which its unity is woven. It is a task that requires punctilious, almost paranoiac attention. Such an attitude of mind characterised the late Middle Ages and the early Renaissance, which saw the universe as a body tattooed with messages whose hermeticism was precisely the clue to their presence and to their importance.



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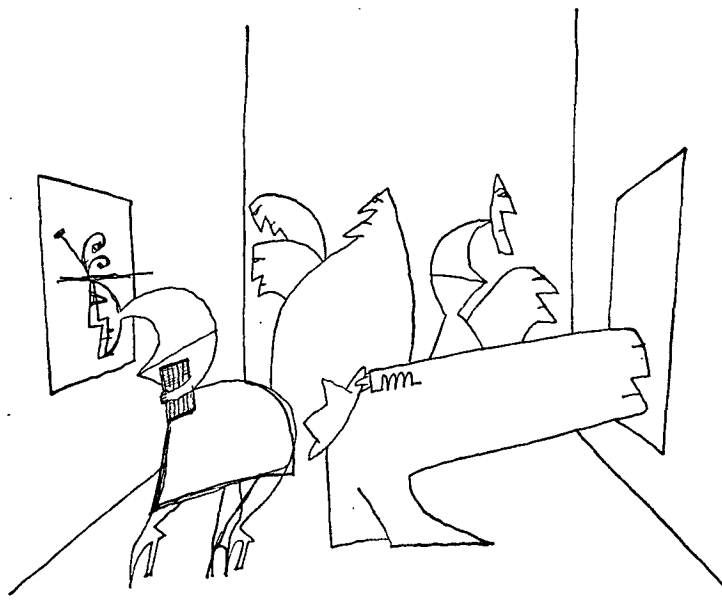
"Herbs communicate with the curious physician through their signature," wrote Crollius in his *Treatise on Signatures*, "thereby revealing to him their inner virtues, hidden under nature's veil of silence."

There's something that doesn't quite fit in with the appearance of a chemistry professor: perhaps more like a professor of alchemy.

More numerous than Deucalion's teeth, the little cubes of the Louvre.... We stand before the *"Phoenix,"* that great stone rug brought back from Tunisia:

"Amazing! Upside down, the goats' heads turn into coat hangers. And those wings, they are there to finish off the goat. That is what those wings are for, those pun butterflies. A flourish of the pen, a script. These goats with their horns and wings are the fathers of topographic ornaments."



The word "script" is uttered seemingly at random, or like a tic. Yet it is the right word. For when a goat's head becomes a coat hanger, when eagle's wings suddenly readjust themselves into giant butterflies, our attention is attracted —as long as we do not perceive exclusively either one or the other of the two terms—to the common form, to the line that binds them. The visual pun is the moment of levitation between two equally loaded messages, the moment when script, usually hidden behind meanings, is unburdened, freed from the gravitational pull of significant sound, and stands for itself.

"The phoenix looks rather like a duck in a phoenix outfit—like Shriners dressed as Turks. You can see how the children of the house, on traversing this room, invented and rigorously followed the tradition of jumping over the goats, setting one foot on the rock and another on the duck."

WE ENTER the Room of Augustus, certainly one of the ugliest in the Louvre.

"This, for me, is the real museum. At once you feel yourself surrounded by thousands of butterflies. The ceiling, the frescos, the gilt reliefs, the marble pavement, the busts—everything clamours to be looked at. It's too much. All those butterflies staring at us."

Indeed, nothing is more dead, more hypnotic than a butterfly pinned to the bottom of a box —unless it is a perfect glass imitation of a butterfly. Steinberg contemplates the ceiling, covered with a hideous fresco in the distinguished manner of Puvis de Chavannes.

"To get rid of those too noble things that he painted on the walls of public buildings, Puvis did grotesque erotic drawings at home."

The ceiling of the next room is no less conspicuous.

"A nightmare! It is an octagon, which is a very tiring shape. And it is filled to the brim! It is the nineteenth century saying: 'Me too!' It competes with the works on exhibit, like Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim."

What in *your* opinion is the best solution for a museum?

"There is no solution. A good museum is a dead museum."

Fayum portraits, imperial busts.... In front of that representing Annius Verus, who died in 169:

"The broken nose, the missing nose makes the beauty of the sphinx. Death takes the noses. A fleshy nose is a sign of life. The death's head, that is the secret of Greta Garbo's fascination. It is also Brigitte Bardot's: a gay death's-head, with a baby's mouth, sensual fish-lips."

Further on, a Fayum portrait, crude, beautiful:

"It is never possible to imitate primitives. You can imitate geniuses, discoverers, inventors. You can explore what they discovered—Cézanne, for instance. But a primitive is the pinnacle of a pyramid. After him, there is nothing. Rousseau, for example.... No offence meant, but who are the primitives today?"

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Bust of a young woman, in marble:

"A real baby, with the real, suction-cup little mouth that babies have. It's the portrait of a Marine, the baby-faced killer. The face is broad as a pizza and the mouth tiny. Small-scale sensuality is what horrifies."

We walk towards the grand staircase. At its foot, a colossal head, that of Lucilla, Lucius Verus' wife:

"That enormous thing, it's a bibelot. Its scale doesn't fit it. Out-of-scaleness is the symbol of tyranny. Slaves created the fussy arts of Indochina (microphilia) and bank architecture (macrophilia). Actually both are forms of necrophilia."

Lucilla, or an introduction to dictatorship: we have reached the first floor and are running the gauntlet of the mammoth Salon canvases. David to the right, David to the left. . . .

"He didn't have faith. The monster. The people of David's sort are sculptor-architects. They regard painting as a form of polychrome sculpture. They translate, transpose. The contrast of the robes in 'The Lictors' is borrowed from the engraver's grisaille. *The blue is the stencil blue one finds in popular prints. How proud he was of his high-relief whites!"*

At *"The Coronation of Napoleon"*:

"What an incredible thing to do! Those huge candlesticks, for example, painted again and again in perspective, what a nightmare! It is the opposite of painting, it is physical labour. Only in sculpture are art and work connected. The sculptor needs to exercise his body. I distrust skinny sculptors."

Fatigue is death's fifth column, sneaked into life by dictatorship. Death sticks to David. In front of the *"The Portrait of Madame Récamier"*:

"It's funereal. He has rediscovered, perhaps unconsciously, the attitude of the deceased on Etruscan tombs."

Deeper and deeper into fatigue's kingdom. Ingres' *"The Apotheosis of Homer"*:

"Professor's art. Homework! How could such a marvellous artist fall in this trap! You can see how he tired himself painting it. Dante changed into a caryatid by the ram's horns of the column behind him—that's the pedant's pun."

About Picot's *"Love and Psyche"*:

"Classical painters, educated by statues, endow their male figures with undersized phalluses, and this causes confusion in girls educated by museums. The academic artists starts to copy plaster folds from childhood. They will remain his great love. Trees, clouds, faces—he would like to translate everything into coloured plaster folds. Folds fascinate, they are the sensuality of children. Van Gogh was obsessed by the ear because it contained all folds: sheets, a woman's shape. It was a form of eroticism. Folds tell everything—too much, in fact. One of the painter's great worries is to make sure that no involuntary symbols hide in his folds. Then, too, folds are connected with the oldest of all the arts: embalming. Folds embalm reality and thereby deify or sublimate it. The best folds I have seen are in a portrait of Lenin. The draped chairs in it are the clouds in the apotheoses—those levitations and ascensions—in the Virgins by Raphael or Rubens. The history of art as viewed by the historians is an embalming concern. One likes relics, not living people. The living disturb. Churches like administrators, not martyrs. Any museum is essentially a wax museum."

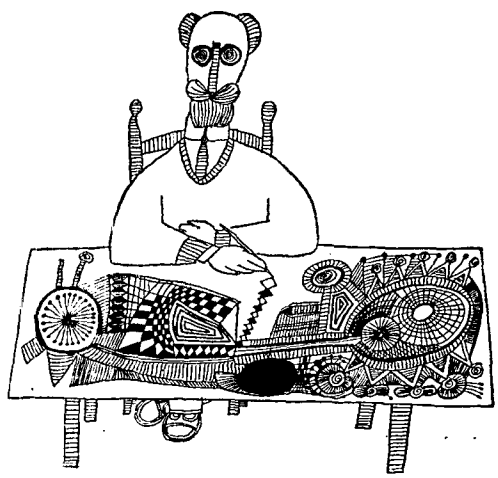
Fortunately, *"The Death of Sardanapalus"* cheers us up.

Dictatorship, terror, fatigue, silence, or (it amounts to the same thing) imposed speech make up the constellation whose evil influence manifests itself by the disappearance of script.

"All good pictures are based on a script, a handwriting. If we don't see this signature, this handwriting, we enter into something frightening (with Puvis' or Ingres' 'The Apotheosis of Homer'), in which it's no longer the artist but society that paints."

We stand before Giotto's *"Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata"*:

"To represent the house, the tree, is a little like writing 'tree.' 'house.' It's like executing beautiful hieroglyphs. What renders pictures like 'The Apotheosis of Homer' frightening is the fact that their creators have been eliminated: there is no longer any writing in them, only a projection of images, of clichés. Whereas in the



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'Sardanapalus,' you can always see the personal writing."

Still, since there is a message in Ingres, there must also be some writing. . . .

"Put it this way then." Steinberg explains, *"Delacroix's work is handwriting, Ingres' is typography."*

Is the hand that essential?

"Yes. There is no writing without the hand and everything that lies behind the hand, all the architecture that weighs on it, moves it—biology, geology, man's history. Writing is the tip of an enormous inverted pyramid."

So all writing is automatically good?

"No, there are bad kinds. In bad writing, you see society's pathological side—like those calligraphic devices they teach girls in finishing schools. Bad writing is artistic bureaucracy—it's an offence against nature. If man expresses himself only through society's means, he has wasted his life; and that is what society wants him to do."

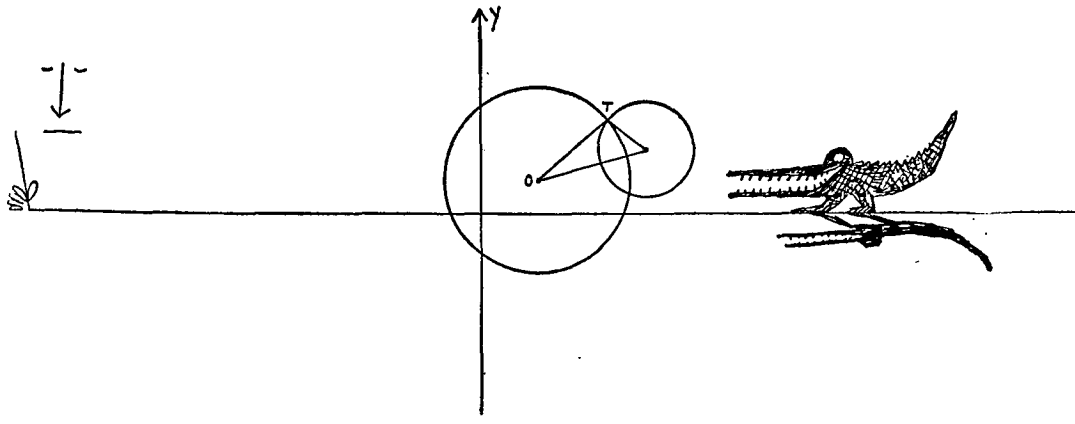
Saint Francis, in brown serge, is kneeling at the foot of the mountain:

"Triangles, circles, rectangles: the composition (a pentagon) is very rigid but not visible. It is a tightrope-walking act. The rays emanating from the saint's hands sustain the angel's heavy image in the air. It is like a very solid mechanical toy. It is a miracle in which all the ingredients are visible. That is the beauty of miracles: they are normal, natural. The transmission of stigmata through gearshifting or geometry delighted the art historian who saw it as the invention of didactic composition."

IS IT NOT MADNESS to hope that an abstract, arbitrary construction such as the alphabet will correspond to the make-up of reality? However, is the distance between a picture painted around 1450 and someone who looks at it today not just as great? And yet, it would seem as if Uccello's *"Battle"* is the visual concretisation of Steinberg's most personal preoccupations.

"Magnificent! It is a philosophic conception of painting. The most interesting thing is the monster formed by the three figures, one behind the other, on the left. The centre part is the least interesting [it shows the victorious condottiere]. *It is writing on orders, dictated. There must always be a feebler part.*

"The only clear elements in the Uccello are the condottiere, *the heads and the rumps of the horses. Everywhere else there are monsters, still lifes. Those flags, those plumes. . . . People have tried to imitate this picture to show war's horrors. But Uccello was frightened, fascinated, by the horror of armour, of hooves. It was his nature. This metaphor of terror holds only for him. Extended to others, generalised, it becomes an allegory, hypocrisy. Strangely, the only bare thing in this picture is the* condottiere's *face—because he is shown frontally rather than in profile. A profile is already a mechanism, a mask. Everything else in the painting is masked, even the soldiers' legs, which are masked by those vivid colours. These are no longer feet, toes, as in the Giotto. And the breastplates, the caparisoned horses: everything here is a masquerade. Uccello is a master of camouflage. The ground, the horizon, are masked by blackness, as well as by the cage formed by the spears. The entire scene takes place in a void. It is a battle between crocodiles, tortoises and crabs locked in a cage. On the ground, only a few tufts of the old nature remain. By losing their green colour (which was suppressed by the painter himself, or by time?), these tufts of grass are bones and beards—relics in a battlefield. And the flag! A flag is always a collage, a mask. But here the flag is even more masked by its undulation, which turns it into a truly indecipherable piece of writing. But what attracts me above all is the left-hand*



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corner: every figure wears a mask. The result is an incredible tricephalous monster.

"It reminds me of something I saw when I was living in Santo Domingo, in 1941. One night I woke up in terror. I sensed that there was something horrible near me. I switched on the light and saw ants, by the thousands, transporting a fat cockroach up the wall. The swarming mass was constantly changing shape—but the centrepiece and the logic of the labour gave it the sinister symmetry of the coat-of-arms, the accumulation of visas in my passport, the political demonstrations seen from a balcony. Grouping makes monsters."

A little farther along, Perugino's *"Virgin and Child Between Saint Catherine and Saint John the Baptist"*:

"How marvellous! That deep green and that red! I like it because of the oleographs I used to see as a child. They lent exactly the same qualities to colours. It is something one likes not as painting but almost as pastry. One looks at it with one's tongue, not with the eyes. It is angelically simple, perfectly natural. Like Braque. However, monsters have always interested us more than angels."

THIS CULT OF THE MONSTROUS derives from Steinberg's view of monstrosity as nature's revenge on the tyranny of the noble, the conventional, the mediocre. We are walking towards the exit when Steinberg stops short in front of Gérard's *"Madame Visconti."* White flesh, a dress whiter yet, stand out against the greens, blues and dark grays of garden and sky:

"From a distance it is a magnificent sight, this banana springing out of the shade. All the clichés of art are there. I would love to own something like that. A civilisation which slowly created this as its image of what the work of art should be! It contains all the battles between Saint George and the dragon, all the Madonnas, as well as quotations from Zurbarán, Velázquez, the Venetians.... The background is by a great theatre specialist. In the sky, on the other hand, he has used the watercolour technique. And in the landscape, the technique of tapestry. Top and bottom have the same intensity. That man invented the photographer's backdrop. He has a special brushstroke for grass, and he has gold following exactly the meanders of the dress....It's horrible. But this is a picture of Uccello's monster—or Melville's Moby Dick, the white whale."

Monstrosity is the absence of writing. But for us to be saved, it is not enough that the writing appear; it must also persist. Yet writing disappears in the process of reading; it dissolves into the meanings that have used it as their vehicle. It must therefore exist as writing, but as indecipherable writing (or as writing that no interpretation will exhaust), like those handwritten messages with which Steinberg fills page upon page. All writing finds its fulfilment in illegibility: such is the law he proclaims. There must be a good deal of truth in it if I am to judge by the difficulties (even greater than usual, no doubt because I was contaminated) which I experienced in decoding the pad on which I noted Steinberg's remarks at the Louvre.

Poem

Never tell her that moonlight becomes her,
For some night you may find yourself once more
In the clearing where you first told her so,
And standing in the saunter of the snow,
Might observe the bony tracks of the birds,
And the snow swept by some scuffle of paws,
And inquire what in her turn she has become.

Nicholas Snowden Willey

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NOTES & TOPICS

Pornographers & Censors

"A VIRTUOUS MAN will not commit adultery. But a wise wife will avoid situations where the possibility is alluring and the opportunity available."

These statements are offered by Mr. Ernest van den Haag, Professor of Social Philosophy in New York University, as clinching analogies in his argument that censorship of the arts is both necessary and desirable ["Is Pornography a Cause of Crime?," ENCOUNTER, December]. Presumably they would hold good in Mr. van den Haag's eyes if re-phrased: "A virtuous woman will not commit adultery. But a wise husband will avoid situations where the possibility is alluring and the opportunity available." Either way, they represent a point of view which, if strictly applied, would reduce all stable sexual relationships to an even more remarkable cat-and-mouse game than they actually are. In the context of pornography they represent an acceptance of absolutes, and a degree of disguised authoritarianism, no longer acceptable in societies which have moved beyond the primitive.

These attitudes, in point of fact, become gradually more apparent as Mr. van den Haag's argument goes on. He begins by demolishing at some length the view, quaintly advanced by some opponents of censorship, that books cannot have any adverse moral influence. Even here, boosting his own morale by setting up an Aunt Sally of no real interest or importance, he at once confuses issues right and left.

"Whether," his opening sentence magisterially begins, "pornography should be treated as a crime is largely a moral question." But even he cannot really mean that; he must mean "whether the peddling of pornography should be treated as a crime." This is not a quibble; the mind which can, even by a slip of the pen, so notably extend the field needs watching. Again, "Many American judges and psychiatrists are convinced that people are born good." Are they? I know Pelagius was British, but surely I am not being merely chauvinistic in supposing that most intelligent men today may well reject original sin, but don't thereby acquire a belief in original virtue; are not at all, in fact, "convinced that people are born good." Once again, this is not a quibble, but a pointer to Mr. van den Haag's inclination towards absolutes.

Twice more Mr. van den Haag quite unnecessarily shows his cloven hoof—when making, as it happens, perfectly valid points, "Were it [sadistic pornography] directed against specific human groups—*e.g.* Jews or Negroes—certainly most liberals would advocate that the circulation of such literature be prohibited." He is quite right, of course, and this is one of the problems which champions of freedom are almost certainly going to have to face in the near future. But the way he has chosen to phrase the observation makes it into an attack on liberal attitudes of mind rather than a strictly relevant comment on the subject under discussion. Again, "Too many grown-ups," he writes, "are far from the self-restrained, healthy type envisaged by democratic theory." Perfectly true, but the way in which he has chosen to frame the remark turns it into a sneer at democratic values.

While carefully blurring the distinction, in successive paragraphs, between hard-core pornography and borderline cases, Mr. van den Haag eventually gives his absolutism free rein. "Serious critics . . . often behave as though they believed criticism to be a matter of opinion." I will accept the possibility that he has been misled by some of the sillier pronouncements of latter-day pseudo-scientific academic behaviour. But I beg him to consider the possibility that *all* truly serious critics behave as though they believed criticism to be a matter of opinion, because in fact they do believe it to be so.

SUCH A POSSIBILITY never enters Mr. van den Haag's fundamentalist head. "Why be a critic," he asks in minatory though ungrammatical outrage, "—and teach in universities—if it involves no more than uttering capricious and arbitrary opinions?" It does not occur to him, such is his blinkered passion for absolutes, that there is any alternative to the tablets of the law this side of the capricious and arbitrary. But he must, if he wants to come to terms with the civilised world, try to understand that just as a man is formed not only by his (so far) unchangeable genes but also by his environment, so the arts can be understood only in the double light of their own character and environment, and the character and environment of those concerned with them. These latter are of course different for every individual; that is why criticism is a matter of opinion, though it need not be capricious and arbitrary. Not but what, incidentally, the capricious and arbitrary is likely to be far more stimulating—and criticism is worthless if it is not stimulating—than the rigid repetition of dogma which Mr. van den Haag seems to envisage as the critical ideal.

Yet, rather touchingly, he does throw in a nervous and illogical parenthesis: "Of course

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critics may disagree"—though he does not specify how, if there is no room for opinion. He had by that point in his argument perhaps become aware that he was showing himself up in a rather blatantly authoritarian light. A little later he tries once again uneasily to widen his stance, and finishes up wrestling with another extraordinary analogy, casting yet more lurid light upon his attitude to human society.

"Impulsively," he cries, "I am against both censors and pornography—but even more I am against one without the other...." So far, so good; this is clearly a tenable position, even if one doesn't share it. But, unhappily inspired by reaching this momentary point of balance, he goes on: "If you are for either you should be for both. On reflection, I am: both are wanted and they call for each other as toreros and bulls do, or hunters and game." Alas for that patch of fine writing, and manly sentiment. It has landed Mr. van den Haag flat on his back again. Does he really believe that the bull calls for the torero, or the game for the hunter? He is very likely right in suggesting that the enthusiast for pornography calls for the titillation of the censor's threat, but which side is he on? His belated enthusiasm for a sort of running fight between the pornographer and censor might seem to signal the most enlightened solution of all to this intractable problem; but the whole tenor of his remarks, his determination to insist on one extreme or the other, makes it all too clear that his sympathies lie with the censors, not the censored, with the hunter, not the game; with the torero, not the bull—and, at that, in a ritual in which the torero-censor can never be hurt (except in terms of a spiritual deformation quite as nasty as that of his prey).

I KNOW NOTHING of Mr. van den Haag; very likely he is not in the least the muddle-headed authoritarian he has made himself appear, only a victim of his own enthusiasm and the inevitable sequence of false positions in which all find themselves who try to control attitudes of mind by law (*i.e.* force), rather than by education and argument. These have once again been painfully illuminated, indeed extended, in England by the latest, and I hope final, stages of the *Last Exit to Brooklyn* case—in which, unfortunately, the false positions are by no means confined to those on the side of some form of control. The law itself was in a false position. The 1959 amendment to the Obscene Publications Act, making provision for the consideration of literary merit, seemed a great step forward at the time; but is now seen to have created, if anything, more problems than it has solved. The law officers, sensible men, initially refused to move on *Last Exit*. Then Sir Cyril Black, seeking for legal loopholes like a truffle-hound, found one (later smartly blocked by Mr. Roy Jenkins when he was Home Secretary) and brought what turned out to be near-farcical action against the book in the Great Marlborough Street magistrate's court. The book was duly found to be obscene.

Why, cried the voices of freedom, should we accept the verdict of one elderly upper-class magistrate? The book must be tried again, by jury. Twelve good men and true would see matters in their true light. So, after an immense amount of prodding, the Director of Public Prosecutions (a non-political office) agreed to co-operate in the martyrdom or triumph of Messrs. Calder & Boyars, the book's doggedly idealistic English publishers. When the case came on, it was impossible not to feel that—no doubt in the hope of stopping nonsense of this kind in future—the prosecution was pulling its punches (initially at least, until the fever of the fray gripped it). All to no purpose. Twelve good men and true also found the book obscene.

Once again the voices of freedom were raised in strenuous chorus. Where once they had disparaged the judgment of a magistrate, and called for a jury, they now disparaged the judgment of this jury—a bunch, one was led to suppose, of rude mechanicals, as unfit to judge the capacity of a book to deprave and corrupt, or to assess its mitigating literary values, as Bully Bottom and his friends were to do justice to the story of Pyramus and Thisbe. Let us, the cry went up, have juries with verifiable qualifications for their task. No, no, came the reply, these jurymen have a right to be regarded as average readers. And all day long the noise of battle rolled, in the correspondence columns of the newspapers and elsewhere; the sort of enfeebling controversy, with broken shards of truth flying on both sides, which will always bedevil such a confrontation of false premises.

The law and the jury were thus placed in a false position. No less so, on these occasions, are the expert witnesses, who are more or less compelled by the necessity of making themselves clear and (I fear) by the heady excitement of the witness-box pulpit, either to say what they mean in grotesquely over-simplified terms so that it emerges as not really what they mean at all, or, carried away, to make claims that the Bible and Shakespeare, or the Prince of Darkness himself, would find it difficult to live up to. Even more false, in another way, is the position of another sort of expert witness, ably exposed in a letter to *The Times* by Mr. Horace Judson. Mr. Judson reviewed the book in *Time* magazine when it was published in the United States, and in terms of strong revulsion. Nor has he basically changed his opinion today,

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though he might express himself more temperately. All the same, it was with obvious dismay that he found his strictures being read out in court as part of the prosecution's case. "Are we not to say we find a work abhorrent and ill-made, and to demonstrate our reasons vigorously, for fear we will invoke a censor we find equally abhorrent?"

A GOOD QUESTION, to which he adds the pregnant afterthought: "Limitations on any writer's freedom have endless resonances." Mr. van den Haag, for one, might care to think over more precisely some of the resonances of his own inclinations. In their light he may be a little less ready to throw accusations of bad faith at those who admit the difficulty of clear decision in these matters; and reflect for a moment whether his postulated brands snatched from the burning can possibly be worth the quibbling, the distortion into which the best of men are led, to say nothing of the encouragement of undercover profiteers and, worse, of prurience disguised as righteousness—the all-enveloping falsity which is the inevitable consequence of attempting to impose censorship in a society which is fighting hard to maintain the individual quality of man.

J. W. Lambert

The Critic Between

DISMAY: yes, J. W. Lambert has hit exactly the feeling. I was dismayed when I first read *Last Exit to Brooklyn* three years ago. I was appalled to learn that the review I had then written for *Time* was being used against the book in its British trials. That freedom of speech is somehow indivisible is a corollary of liberal faith which usually lies unexamined: but the verdict went against *Last Exit*, and thus proved that the law which threatens the novelist, gags the critic. One way or another, by the existence of this censorship, every man of letters is inhibited in the judgments he may express.

There was all too much in my review that was usable by the prosecution:

> Apparently on the assumption that literary sex and violence, like heroin addiction, only gives kicks when the dosage is steadily increased, this new offering is even more extreme than... [Grove Press'] earlier peddlings in the same line.... There are critics... who will defend as art and high realism a book that describes such life with the primitive but undeniable power and anger that author Selby demonstrates. But *Last Exit to Brooklyn* is not realism at all. In-

"...I would put my personal repute behind the authenticity of this document, so I would testify to the validity of its conclusions"

Herschel McLandress
(PROFESSOR J K GALBRAITH)

REPORT FROM IRON MOUNTAIN

ON THE POSSIBILITY AND DESIRABILITY OF PEACE

With introductory material by
LEONARD C LEWIN

"...a telling and oddly lucid outline of some important theoretical problems of peace and war that have rarely been admitted to in public or in private"
THE NEW YORK TIMES

"...Is causing as much controversy as George Orwell's '1984'"
SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

"The Report, down to its last footnote, is one of the finest pieces of social satire produced in this era of systems-analysis, war games, peace games and apocalyptic fun and games"
THE WASHINGTON POST

...the book you were not meant to read—

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> stead, it is a hypocrisy just as flagrant as the old-fashioned kind that wrote ---- for dirty words and * * * * for scenes of sex. What Selby scrupulously elides are all the pleasant moments of life. What's left, he tells in a style that will also inevitably be hailed as "tape-recorder realism"—because it mumbles like the non-stop mouthings of a drink-sodden bum or screams like a border-line psychotic.

Writing for *Time* can be a severe discipline; but this editorial went up the editorial conveyor with hardly a pencil laid on it. When John Mathew for the Crown asked a literary critic in the box whether he agreed with this review in *Time*, the words Mathew then proceeded to quote were mine.

The words are naïve and showy; but the final judgment should be pressed further. What is appalling about *Last Exit* is not its implacable violence and perversity. Those qualities inevitably get to you; yet *implacable* is today if anything a modish term of praise, as it could be about this book. No, *Last Exit* is bad because it is not what it pretends to be. Realism? The answer is still, not realism at all. People do live like that—but not Selby's people. There is a disjunction between the environments and pressures Selby describes, though these are thoroughly vile, and the violence of his characters. They don't suffer too much: they fail to suffer enough, because they have nothing to suffer with. It is just here that the comparison of Selby to Dickens, made by several defence witnesses, becomes patently foolish. We are told the damned in hell writhe in the flame of what they lack. That despair could fuel the actions Selby describes—indeed, in the best section of the book it almost does—and that alone could move the reader to the response the book ostensibly demands.

Beneath this is another failing: a queasy confusion about the central subject, homosexuality. Anger? The answer is finally, no. The attitudes are buried in ambiguity, and expressed largely in an argot for which most of us need a phrase-book. Perhaps the most illuminating example is *nature*, which seems to mean an exclusively homosexual libido, as when one queen refrains from giving his lover another Benzedrine because "too much might kill his nature." But the word also carries a built-in psychology of homosexuality. Here and throughout, careful reading demonstrates that the book has nothing more to say about homosexuality than the tired, queer rationalisation. "We're made that way (and so are a lot of other men who refuse to admit it)." Our understanding is not enlarged.

Nevertheless, the book has obvious merits. There are stretches of vivid sociological reporting—valuable enough, one hopes, to redeem the honour of those who talked of Dickens. Above all, there is a sustained power of language. Any writer can learn from it.

Yet I cannot see how any jury could fail to find *Last Exit* obscene. The book suffered only local and temporary prohibitions in the United States, but that was because the constitutional protection was clear from previous court decisions. In the United States, since 1933 when Judge Woolsey freed Joyce's *Ulysses* and began the great chain of precedents, it has been judges, not juries, who have progressively opened up the law of obscenity. Often, indeed, the American decisions have been those of judges overturning jury verdicts.

I note that an appeal is planned in the *Last Exit* case. A contrast which strikes an American observer is that in England the effectiveness of an appeal against a jury's finding of fact—for fact is what the *Last Exit* jury found—is limited. There is no way to set the constitution against the statute, as in the U.S.A. That series of judge-made precedents beginning with Woolsey—excellent literature in their own right some of them are, too—is hardly possible in England.

To an American, the British jury seems a particularly doubtful instrument for a case of this sort. We who are far more committed to the jury system than you, also distrust it more, setting it about with safeguards. In the *Last Exit* trial at the Old Bailey, the first twelve prospective jurors who entered the courtroom became the jury. Each faced, as his only qualification, that he was obliged to read the oath, an ingenious contrivance to show without appearance of insult that he was not totally illiterate. Eighteen months ago, when England was beginning to debate the change to ten-to-two-majority jury verdicts in criminal trials, I happened to be present when Justice Potter Stewart of the U.S. Supreme Court asked Lord Parker, the Lord Chief Justice, the fundamental question about the fundamental difference: "You don't use the *voir dire*, do you?" In substance, this is the first question any American layman asks about the English use of the jury. The English response may sniff at the seeming indignity and waste of time in the American interrogation and discard of jurors. This is no answer, as the *Last Exit* case shows.

Thus when John Calder, after the book he published lost its first trial before the Marlborough Street magistrate, made it clear that he was inviting further prosecution and a jury trial, that desire seemed to spring from a kind of moral euphoria from which his friends should have dissuaded him. On the other hand, after losing the second trial, though Calder was not in most eyes the man to plead the point,

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he was still quite right in complaining that juries in cases like these should have special qualifications. In the U.S., the *voir dire* at least ensures that fewer of the jurors have special disqualifications.

To SUCH AN AUDIENCE, with such a purpose, can a critic publish his true and full opinion? Can a critic appearing as expert witness for the defence say, as he would hope to do in a review, what's wrong with the book as well as what's good? Surely, every critic who appeared for either side felt the weight of censorship on his tongue—just as I do henceforth on my pen. For now that the case is lost, how are we to review the next book that may seem to lie near this newly established border-line? Once again: are we not to say we find a work abhorrent and ill-made, and to demonstrate our reasons vigorously, for fear we will invoke a censor we find equally abhorrent?

Clearly the law must be reformed. A book like *Last Exit* must be publishable; critics must no longer be obliged, by the threat of the consequences, to suppress or distort their own judgments in the very act of formulation. Is it time to consider doing what Denmark did last June, to abolish altogether any prohibitions against written pornography and obscenity? Two years ago, the then Minister of Justice, K. Axel Nielsen, asked the Danish permanent advisory commission on criminal law reform to report on censorship of the written word. The commission's members are the ombudsman, the director of public prosecutions, the president of the court of appeals, and a professor of criminology at the University of Copenhagen. Their conclusion, after testimony from psychiatrists, sociologists and schoolmasters, was that no evidence exists to prove that pornography, perverse and cruel, does harm, even to adolescents; and further that for a few shy or inhibited people it may do good.

Knud Waaben, the criminologist on the Danish commission, told me in December that

> "before we had the reports, I expected that the psychiatric testimony might support the law as it was. If that had still been the dominant view, it might have changed our conclusion completely. But the testimony was extremely strong against there being any dangers in pornography. I wondered what was to be gained by retaining the possibility of convicting a very very limited number of the very worst nasty books. Then also, we asked is it really possible to draw a just line between those books that can be published, and those in danger of being prosecuted? Of course it was also argued very strongly by authors and publishers that freedom to print pornography is a simple consequence of the principle of freedom of the press."

Q. *What do the readers of monthly journals require?*

A. *The readers of monthly journals require analysis, acuteness, distillation, thoroughness, comment, aptness, suggestions, usefulness, opinion, frankness, expression, stylishness, reviews, fairness, correspondence, crustiness, academics, mellowness, complexity, awareness, policy, effectiveness, contributors, faithfulness, editorials, persuasiveness, layout, neatness, and goodness*

and **GUINNESS**

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Without controversy and almost totally without opposition in press or parliament (the final vote was 159 to 13, of a total parliamentary membership of 179—nobody even bothered to duck), the repeal was accepted. "There were more useful things for the police and the courts to be doing," the Minister of Justice said. "Reports are that the business in pornography is already dropping."

The drop in sales is confirmed by Danish trade sources. Distributors of soft-cover hard-core (for example, *Letters from Annette* in the "porno series") say that six months before the repeal, a new, illegal pornographic title would go out to newsstands and kiosks in 20,000 to 25,000 copies. Today, only about half that number are printed, and of those, 35 to 50 per cent come back unsold. Others put the fall in sales even higher. Hans Reitzel, who is the Danish publisher of Freud, Genet, and Henry Miller, says that

> "before the change, an initial printing of 50,000 copies of a new erotic work, legally publishable, was typical, and a total sale of 100,000 copies was not unusual. Now, trade sources tell me that only 10,000 copies, 20,000 at most, are printed, and that the rate of return is running as high as 70 to 80 per cent on these."

Another corollary of liberal faith demonstrated?

Horace Judson

London Commentary

Whither the Marketeers?

Ways Out of the European Deadlock — By STANLEY HENIG

SOME TIME late in 1962 I was talking with one of the most prominent pro-marketeers in the Labour Party about our possible courses of action in the event that the party finally came out in complete opposition to British entry into the European Community. I recalled this conversation on 10 May last year when the House of Commons voted by a massive 488 to 62 to support a Labour government's decision to re-apply for admission. Undoubtedly, there has been a great change of heart in the Labour movement, led by the younger generation who are most devoted pro-Europeans. On the other hand, 10 May was also a further triumph for our system of government by alternate, powerful machines. Many who voted with the majority on that night remained unenthusiastic and unconvinced—willing to support Britain's entry if the government could achieve it, but equally ready to heave a sigh of relief if the venture failed. In this fact lies the inherent danger of the present situation.

Once again, de Gaulle has vetoed our application and the government's European policy is in ruins. It was heroic of the Foreign Secretary to state on 20 December that we had simply been seeking a clear statement from the Six, and that now we had it, we could proceed to business. As a pro-marketeer I was very willing to cheer that statement in its parliamentary context. Unfortunately, though, it flies away from the hard facts of the situation. The Six have not, in effect, been able to make any statement other than one recording their own divisions, and there is no very obvious business to which we can proceed along the lines of declared policy.

I suspect that the original and crucial mistake was made twelve months ago during "the probe." I assumed that in Paris the Prime Minister would ask de Gaulle outright what his terms were for British admission and that we would only apply if we were ready to pay the price. It now seems doubtful that the question was ever asked and quite certain that it was never answered in a positive manner. Nonetheless we proceeded, and two reasons can be adduced. First, there was the belief, cherished by the Foreign Secretary, that an expression of our firm political will to enter Europe would be enough to surmount all hurdles. Second, there was the traditional Foreign Office theory that we were about to engage de Gaulle in a poker game and that the player with the best nerves would win. Although the Foreign Office has brushed up its technique since the last round, it seems to me highly doubtful that their approach was likely to yield results. Almost certainly, George Brown's instincts were more

STANLEY HENIG *is the Labour MP for Lancaster. He is 28 and a former don (political science) at Lancaster University. He contributed an article on "Parliamentary Frustrations" to the September 1967* ENCOUNTER.

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sound. Unfortunately, though, both theories were founded on the false premise that de Gaulle would not again pronounce an outright veto.

In recent months, pro-Marketeers have felt an increasing sense of frustration, as the government's miscalculation became more apparent. The nature of the parliamentary system and the publicity given to statements by M.P.s made it virtually impossible for those in the House with most knowledge about the E.E.C. to speak out, for fear that they might jeopardise the government's efforts. Naturally, anti-Marketeers faced no such restrictions since their central aim was to thwart government policy, and they would appear, as a result, to have been carrying all before them. In present circumstances, pro-Marketeers must be less reticent. Although a majority of the party would still like to see Britain in the E.E.C., the dynamics of the current situation are likely to make this permanently impossible unless a new flexibility can be brought into the government's policy.

It is axiomatic that in terms of European relations the most disastrous consequence of the veto would be for Britain to turn her back on Europe altogether. This would seem to prove the contention that we were "never serious," and the E.E.C. would revert to concentration on its own development. If this happened it would make much more difficult our problems of ultimate adjustment. On the other hand, so long as we are actively knocking on the door, the E.E.C. is unlikely to be able to resume regular business. The government fully appreciates this and their assertion that our application is still valid is based on a sound strategy. Unfortunately, it does not take into account certain other political considerations. It is quite unacceptable to domestic public opinion that Britain should appear as the grovelling twice-rejected suitor of Europe. In his handling of the issue at the 1966 General Election, Harold Wilson clearly appreciated this. Urgency is temporarily taken from this problem by the Conservatives' pro-European zeal; but the nearer the approach of the next election, the greater the temptation to return to a more xenophobic line. In 1962 my greatest fear was not simply that Labour might do just this, but that it might reap the most profitable electoral dividends under certain circumstances. If by 1970 there is no thaw in France, then those circumstances may well be with us. The challenge for pro-Marketeers is clearly what policy options they can devise to avoid this potential disaster, because it is not sufficient simply to sit around and hope that the General disappears from the scene before our next general election.

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Macmillan Poetry

PERHAPS the first point to establish is that in the long run only membership of the E.E.C. will solve our basic problems of world orientation. In recent months a variety of alternatives have been canvassed, chiefly by opponents of the E.E.C., but they all tend to lack credibility. The first is some kind of Atlantic Union. This implies domination by the United States and will pose the most fearsome problems for Britain's manufacturing industry and agriculture. The second is a further (unspecified) development of the Commonwealth. Here the real difficulty is that the independent countries who have broken the chains of imperial dependence show no desire to re-solder old or new links with us. The white dominions might be the exception, although institutional connections with them alone would break up the multi-racial Commonwealth. The other problem is that Canada can hardly act independently of the United States, whilst Australasia is after all on the other side of the world and we are trying to withdraw from "East of Suez." Finally, it is hard to see how economic relations with Australia and New Zealand can be developed much further at a time when they are seeking increased industrialisation. The third alternative is further development of E.F.T.A., and it is true that we always turn back to this group when moves for closer links with the E.E.C. break down. This is precisely because E.F.T.A. remains a second best—a group of countries most of whom are more attracted to the E.E.C. than they are to each other. Finally, it has been suggested that we might offer to "lead the developing world," despite their lack of desire for such a lead, or, somehow, "join with Eastern Europe"—a complete non-starter. The trouble with all these suggestions is that none of them offers a basis for a comprehensive policy. We can strengthen our trade links with all these countries from a stronger base within Europe. Above all, we are a Western European country, and at a time when we are withdrawing from our former world responsibilities, we can hardly make a change of continents.

The real alternatives in the long run, then, are either to join the E.E.C. and use this as a base for playing an appropriate economic and political role in the world, or remain in unsplendid isolation, holding to a rather lower standard of living than continental Europe and making no contribution to world economic or political problems. Of course, this may seem to bring us back to square one; but it also clears the ground for considering whether even after the veto, we can put forward constructive proposals to facilitate our ultimate entry into Europe.

A cardinal feature of government policy ever since the decision to apply to the E.E.C. for

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entry has been that we are only interested in full-membership and not in any "middle way," *e.g.*, associate membership. So long as full membership seemed possible, this was strategically sound; but in the changed circumstances, is not a reappraisal needed?

The difficulty about the concept of association is that it has never been fully understood in Britain and there has been a tendency to exploit the usage of the term for political effect. As far as European countries are concerned the relevant article of the Treaty of Rome is number 238:

> The Community may conclude with a third country, with a union of states or with an international organisation, agreements creating an association involving reciprocal rights and obligations, joint actions and special procedures. These agreements shall be concluded by the Council by unanimous decision and after the Assembly has been consulted. Where such agreements involve amendments to this Treaty, such amendments shall first be adopted in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 236.

Thus Article 238 is a *"loi cadre"*—it provides only the loosest framework, in which the detailed arrangements can be varied according to circumstances.

To date Greece and Turkey have become "associates" and some have argued that a régime suitable for them simply cannot be right for us. This misses the point. Nobody is suggesting the same arrangements, only that they be equally compatible with Article 238. The E.E.C. have often thought about establishing "an association doctrine." Although this has never been done, trends can be discerned in the thinking about this new departure. In the early days, the Commission tended to lay great stress on the flexibility of Article 238 and to assert that it permitted all kinds of relationships with other countries ranging from a declaration of friendship to near membership. By 1962, though, it was felt that European countries should seek firm membership rather than association. Recently there has again been a reversion to the older, more liberal line.

I have occasionally heard it suggested that Britain should seek a permanent association agreement with the E.E.C. Many of those advocating such a policy have also been strong opponents of our full membership, and one can question both their sincerity and their judgment. Even Greece and Turkey will one distant day be full members. An associate has no voting rights inside the Community and can thus play no real role in the new construction of Europe. For a country the size of Britain, ***permanent*** association is unacceptable. What we need to explore is whether a ***temporary*** association can begin the process of identifying us with Europe and make possible Britain's rapid full membership when there is a change of government in France.

THE FIRST POINT to note is that on a number of occasions, the French have proposed just this. Couve de Murville has often stated that Britain needs a further period of time "to adjust for Europe," and, indeed, there is a good deal of truth in this. The second point is that if we are an associate who is ultimately going to be a member, then some of the Six are likely to consult occasionally with us on points of interest about to be decided inside the E.E.C. Finally, the achievement of a temporary form of association would avoid the danger of a complete break-down in European relations while giving the government something tangible as a reward for their policies.

It has been argued that the real difficulty about such an arrangement is that it would take as long to negotiate as full membership and would only constitute one set of negotiations—later we would have to start all over again when we moved to the next stage. This need not be the case, since the object of the association would after all be to facilitate our entry. I should think that the following scheme could be very rapidly tested by the government for its merit.

We should seek agreement with the Six on the principle of our ultimate entry and the establishment of an association with that principle as the objective. Common institutions would be set up by the association to harmonise British and E.E.C. policies in the various spheres covered by the Treaty of Rome. During the course of the association, free trade and a common market could be progressively established. The association would end when there was general agreement that Britain could become a full member.

I am not advocating this course of action out of certainty or optimism about its success. The point I am making is that with previous policies inoperative, there is a need for flexibility consonant with the ultimate objective of Britain's entry. In any event, we must extricate ourselves from the present deadlock and avoid the foreseeable danger of a total reversion from Europe. Above all, I have a suspicion that despite his two vetoes, the General would not like to go down in history as the man who prevented the consummation of Western European unity. There may be a chink in the Gaullist armour that intelligent statecraft could exploit. Perhaps the next action of the government ought to be to start again with a fresh probe in Paris. This time, at least, they could ask the right questions.

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Letter from Hamburg

The Eros Centre

By Heike Doutiné

SURELY NOT since the festivals of ancient Greece was there a more curious occasion to honour Eros, God of Love and associated virtues. The honourable gentlemen from the Hamburg *Senat* joined together with some seven thousand ladies of the profession in the Lichtstrasse to inaugurate a new era in the history of passion and society.

Since 1923 there has been a local ordinance prohibiting the establishment of what used to be called disorderly houses; but, since policemen and parliamentarians alike kept turning a blind eye, both houses and disorder flourished merrily along the famous *Reeperbahn*. What, then, is so new and special about the so-called Eros Centre? That a little local band of musicians played *"Wir winden dir den Jungfernkranz"* when the foundation stone was laid? That the formal ceremony praised architects and bricklayers and offered up blessings, *Segen auf allen Wegen?* That everybody, in advance, congratulated each other in fulsome gratitude? I listened to the fateful words. "...And I hereby christen this house with the name of EROS CENTRE...." And then there were greetings to *Herr Amtsrat* Vogt, *Herr Oberbaurat* Albrecht, and *Herr Kriminaloberrat* Heuer. At long last a severe civic problem had been solved. A brilliant new way had been found to deal with the joyful ladies on overcrowded streets. The traffic jams on the Schmuckstrasse could now be eased. It was all a triumph of urban planning, and although when the talk was of the "ladies" and gentlemen one could almost see the inverted commas hanging in mid-air, everyone felt pleased and reassured: private vices, public virtues. And all the two hundred rooms were achievements of modern sanitary technology.

If there was an uneasy tone to consciences troubled by "immorality," I failed to detect it. St. Pauli, always an easy-come easy-go winner, now belonged officially to the affluent society, and some ten million D-marks of monthly turnover could now be taxed and calculated to the credit of the *Rathaus*. What good burgher on the Alster could be upset? So long as everything was kept clinical, and that is the way it's kept. With a nice turn to festive earnestness, we were reassured, "...all the corridors are fully tiled. Everything possible has been properly arranged. The Main Tenants, who are nine in number, have committed themselves to look after order and hygiene and smooth operations...." One couldn't help thinking of good old John Gay and Bert Brecht. *Die Dreigroschenoper* still had a sweet flair for the sinfulness of it all. Sex in '68 comes white-tiled.

Language itself has been updated. There is no longer a *Puffmutter* but a main tenant, a *Hauptmieter*, who is in charge of running things. And the ladies in inverted commas are no longer whores but simply solid tax-paying citizens, and long may their labours prosper. Sin has been assimilated to free enterprise, and old ethics has been turned over to new clean rules of industrial competition. Money is money. A society must face such problems *objectively*, and after all a really diligent lady can earn something like 300 to 600 D-marks per night. The Eros Centre is a sound investment and surely there'll be no trouble as with those crashing *Starfighters*. More than that: with an average of ten nocturnal visitors each employee will be inspected by a doctor at least once a week.

I should explain here that, since 1953, venereal diseases no longer have to be officially reported. That was the era of penicillin illusions, and as the drug declines the V.D. figures soar back. Progress through paralysis? But the chairman of the Citizens' Committee has offered a guarantee: "...the Main Tenants are all decent people, all merchants who want to do their best for the business...." The nightlife here is a gold mine, and in the dark all cats are grey. A voice, not untouched by a lifetime of Sunday sermons, tells us that never did the children of light and the children of darkness work so well together as in this "most meaningful cooperation between Senators and Policemen and Everyman...."

FRL. HEIKE DOUTINÉ *is a young writer (blonde, pretty, and 22) who has had two volumes of poetry published in Germany. Despite the tempting offers made to her in the course of this assignment, she will, as she says, be continuing her literary career.*

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A man with some legal training explains that complicated bit about 1923 to me. "It is true that there is an annex to the law of 31.10.23 which lists the various 'prohibited activities.' But in 1960 a new Bonn statute came into existence and, in my opinion, this is now the effective law of the land. So I can't see where the building of bordellos is expressly forbidden any more. True, nobody in the housing authorities is authorised to give permission for the construction of some new whore-house, but then what they don't know won't hurt them...." Conceivably, the damage, according to another expert who referred me to §*180* of the *StGB*, could be considerable if someone decides to sue under the provision which stipulates that bordello-type activities are prosecutable as *Kuppelei* (or pandering).... Have the Main Tenants already taken advice?

Still, no chairman of a Citizen's Committee can carry a law-book around in his pocket: he carries the burden of civic cleanliness and it is quite obvious to him that "when the girls leave the streets, then the houses will be full...." This is one "either/or" that causes no Kierkegaardian fear or trembling.

THE CENTRE has two hundred rooms. Of the 7,000 *"freundlichen Frauen"* (turnover: 10 million DM), some 5,000 are registered. I am reliably informed that the missing persons comprise "office secretaries and housewives" who are tempted to pick up an extra *Hunderter* for the week-end or that colour-TV set. Will the doors of the *Lustsilo* also be open to them?

I followed the neon signs which conducted me down the right path: along the *Reeperbahn*, past the "Sahara Bar," to the oasis of love. In the courtyard there is Truberg, the *friseur*, and his salon has pretty oval mirrors, elegant lace covers, and old rococo engravings. I escape his modest offer of exchanged glances, pass the pub called *Zum Feinschmecker*, and go on to the asphalted erotic parade ground, a small square central plaza surrounded by four four-storey buildings. No light comes through the windows, and if nothing comes out nothing goes in either: the windows can't be opened and it seems like a sensible precaution against black marketeering. One thing I concede already: everything is in good controlled order as far as the eye can see. There is a handsome Hanseatic briskness about these barracks (or, perhaps, shopping-centres) of love. In the basement garage where I begin my tour I find nothing but Mercedes after Mercedes. At the far end: the central heating. Up the spick-and-span staircase past two unassuming name-plates: *Amorette, Mahagonny*. Everything is a shiny hospital white. Long live white-tiled sex!

Up in the lift to a second-floor bar, with *discothèque*, flowery wallpaper, crystal chandelier, and a tasteful red lamp to indicate the proper direction. On to *Amorette*, with little silver numbers on the door. A spongy red runner crawls along the hallway. I hear vacuum cleaners everywhere, and they all seem to be singing: *Morgen, morgen*, for today is only Press Day and tomorrow is the grand opening. "Have you wiped your boots clean?" a wizened old char says to me. "Everything is brand new and should be kept proper for tomorrow." I go into Apartment #4. On my left a black-and-yellow tiled bathroom with all the latest fittings, and ahead the Room which is perhaps four-by-four, with yellow wallpaper, two black leather chairs, on one side a dressing table and, on the other, the bed backed up against a full-length mirror.

"ARE YOU from the Press?" an elderly Lili Marlene, still blonde and full in a white linen dress, comes to greet me with elongated finger-nails like talons. Two of the oldest professions exchange courtesies. "...and here is the built-in closet, all of rosewood, and over there the kitchen niche where the girls can make their coffee, and here behind the door is an enamelled dust-bin and a laundry hamper. Hygiene is our guiding principle...." My eye is caught by the empty wooden frame over the bed. "Ah, that's a little safe built into the wall and a painting is still to come which will cover it. Maybe a Rubens. But then the girls will have their free choice for it'll be their money behind the picture. One slips it into the slot and it falls through safely. *Praktisch, nicht?*"

Lili Marlene is brimming with facts. "That mirror by the bed can, of course, be covered by draped curtains, and for the more prudish there are even apartments 'without'...." I accompany her into the waiting-room with a small bar of its own and I meet Lili's husband, tenderly called "Kurti," who is one of the nine Main Tenants.

"I have," he explains, "the third and fourth *Etage*, ten rooms in all. There's a waiting-room like this one to every block, a kind of place for the girls to relax in when they've been busy.... And how about you? How do you like the place? ... You say you're from the Press! Much too pretty to be a scribbler. It doesn't have to be that way, you know, the way you're built...." Our negotiations are interrupted by a man bringing in a new gramophone.

"Oh, I forgot," Lili adds, "there'll be a nice little night-table in each apartment, if the girls ever want to read...." I don't press the literary chit-chat, and learn that there is an

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alarm button behind every cushion, just in case. In front of me are the flashing lights of the central alarm system, going through a dry run of an erotic emergency.

Beer? Coca Cola? I take a drink with Kurti. "Every tenant has furnished his own floor in his own style. I wanted something very special and took the trouble to look up things in the *Duden*. I came across *Amor*, one of those old love gods, and then I thought of *maisonette*, so now my two floors are called *Amorette*. You've just got to have a little fantasy...." He made it all seem like a do-it-yourself operation, a kind of cut-up dress pattern you can buy in the department store. "But what things cost! Look at that door, filled with sand, weighs 180 pounds.... And look at that gramophone, with that great 33⅓ turntable which takes 15 records just the way the girls wanted it. I have done everything absolutely *modern*...."

Lili agrees. "You see, we want girls who are also a little on the modern side, with mini-skirts and things. For a beginning the style isn't bad, and later on we can blend things a bit better. You know the ladies will also be taking a hand in the arrangements.... And look, you're also wearing a mini-skirt—see what I mean? Everything's getting to be more natural. Ladies used to be covered down to the ankles and everybody wanted to know what it looked like underneath. But today! That mini has changed the world a lot. Maybe in ten years we'll all be running around with only a little belt, and then the men can save themselves the trouble of going to a bordello....

"And did I tell you? No men will be allowed in this room at all. And the new girls like that. I've already seen a few and they're charming. But naturally I'll only take girls who will work hard. And if possible, from the outside. New brooms sweep clean. Two I've already got, and if I can get a few more girls from the South, and another couple of Negresses, a Chinese, and maybe an Indian girl, then I must say that we'd have a really rich *Palette* of exotic choices.... Only, those first four weeks are going to be difficult until the whole business begins to run properly. But when the first ones begin to come then everybody follows in a rush. Business along the Herbertstrasse is already only half of what it was, and the girls there might be tempted to leave. Won't be easy, when everybody is watching over her own chicks. That's why all these terrible rumours are being spread...."

WHAT TERRIBLE rumours? I hadn't heard. "Well," as Kurti explains, "take that one about

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our girls having to pay key-money! 3,000 to 5,000 Marks, they say, and actually we only take a daily rent of 25 Marks and that's it.... Or the one about there being a rule against women over thirty, when everybody knows that the over-thirties do the best business....But it will all straighten itself out, and the Herbertstrasse will be left with nothing but rheumatic types. The ambitious ones—they'll come to us. Here everything is nice and new and with every comfort...."

Lili, as always, could add a fact or two more. "You know, there was this house on the Bahnhofstrasse in Düsseldorf and for the first half-year it was practically empty. And today? Today things have really hotted up. You can't imagine the crowds. Somebody comes down every five minutes and she's really jumped upon, but who gets there first, sings first. And that's the way it's going to be here...."

Kurti is so objective and technical: a three-letter word like sin never crossed his mind or lips. Girls are a productive capacity and when well organised should return a certain percentage on investment. As he talks he sounds more and more like a factory director looking for a better machine. What could ever be wrong with supplying consumer goods to meet consumer demand?

Still, like every businessman, he has his worries. "We're just a bunch of nervous wrecks. Tomorrow is Opening Day, and the curtains aren't even up yet. The mistake we made was to take the same firm for all deliveries, just because they give you a bigger discount, and now the stuff is just dribbling in. That won't happen to me again...."

DOWNSTAIRS in the *Feinschmecker* I find the Builder of the Eros Centre and he offers me an *Erbsensuppe*, and after the pea soup, the choice of a buffet with smoked hams and steaks *bleu*. "Yes, this place is on the small side," he says, "almost intimate, you might say. That's because the girls will be ordering food up in their rooms. All they want to eat, of course—but the drinking will be legally limited....Didn't it ever occur to those Senators that someone could bring his own bottle along? But no fault-finding. They gave their blessings to a good cause, and that's enough. The authorities all seem to be quite satisfied, and well they might be. Everything is really modern, just like the book says. And the girls will be off the streets in no time at all. You know there must be about a thousand working the Kastanienallee, and that in a residential quarter!...Nowadays, it's all new frontiers. I've put up hundreds and hundreds of buildings—but this kind of thing is unexplored territory. Take alone that alarm system—why, I'm a pioneer!..."

As for the future of modern love—did he foresee any kind of coming crisis or change in the erotic habits of Western man? "Well, the competition will probably begin building within the year. Something just like this Centre. We'll have to wait and see how it works out, because we're all in the same boat and if this doesn't go, nothing will go any more....The chances are pretty good. Look at the Main Tenants, all decent responsible people. One runs a *Pension* not far away on the Alster, and another is a first-class jeweller. True, one character doesn't know the first thing about anything, but then his wife does. And it's really a tough job, twenty-four hours round the clock, and not even the city's transport services can match that!... What plans you see realised here! Three years of work, but now the thing is finally there, standing. 4,000 square metres of expensive real estate. Twelve months' construction. Costs almost reached 5 million marks....Well, it's all over now. And to think I probably could have saved some 150 thousand marks on those damned bathrooms! Not to mention those crazy doors. And every pipe made out of copper. And those three working shifts, day and night...."

At the risk of giving away trade secrets imparted to me in some confidence, I record in conclusion my final interview with a well-informed entrepreneur who offered me *Sekt* and the following Kinseyan (or Keynesian?) details: "Girls usually have to pay something like 63 DM per night. Here the rent usually runs to 28 and 30 marks, maybe 35 if you include linen...." But, then, Lili Marlene gave me the figure of 25, and the Builder estimated between 28 and 35, and I note in the *Bildzeitung* a prediction that it would settle in at 43. "Well, we'll be doing our best with a policy of holding the price line. But maybe next year....Anyway, just remember this: a thing has got to be done well or not at all. And this place has been built to last...."

Night was falling fast and I decided it was high time to leave. The Builder left too, on his way to a well-deserved holiday in Tenerife. Walking out with me as we crossed the parade grounds out of the barracks of love was a 22-year-old hairdresser from a near-by salon. We strolled and chatted, and when I asked she told me, "You know, when I was still working, I just managed to make my 500 D-marks in a month. That's what I now make in a night as easy as child's play...." That, naturally, is an argument.

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METHUEN

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A Case for Treatment

The World of Lytton Strachey — By GORONWY REES

THE PUBLICATION of the second volume of Mr. Michael Holroyd's life of Lytton Strachey completes one of the most ambitious biographical enterprises that has been undertaken in recent years.[1] Mr. Holroyd has been engaged on the book for over six years, and he has made exhaustive and skilful use of the over thirty thousand letters, and a mass of other documentary material, which have been made available to him. His two volumes together number some twelve hundred pages, or something over half a million words. It is the kind of treatment which Morley gave to Gladstone, or Moneypenny and Buckle to Disraeli, and certainly few writers in our time have been given quite so impressive a memorial. It seems an odd trick of fate, or of Mr. Holroyd's, to have picked out Strachey in particular, who needed only a long essay to bring a Manning or a Gordon to life, for analysis in such length and depth.

Indeed, one cannot help feeling that the book might have benefited if Mr. Holroyd had taken a lesson from Strachey in the art of compression. His book is so long very largely because he often takes a quite inordinate number of words to say something which is really very simple, and this gives it a ponderous, almost oppressive air which is strangely at odds with Strachey's volatile, mocking, and cynical spirit; at times it almost reads as if Samuel Smiles had devoted himself to a life of Voltaire. Perhaps this is why some of Strachey's surviving friends have complained that they cannot recognise the man they knew in these pages. Something, and especially laughter and lightness and wit, has disappeared under the weight of words, and one can sympathise with James Strachey's protests, which Mr. Holroyd is honest enough to quote, against the light in which his brother is sometimes shown here. After all, he was a figure out of comedy, rather than near-tragedy as Mr. Holroyd sometimes makes him appear; there are pages in which he envelops Strachey in almost Dostoevskean gloom, and greatly though Strachey himself admired Dostoevsky, I do not think he would have recognised himself as a character out of *The Possessed*.

One may doubt, indeed, whether there is not a fundamental lack of proportion between the immense length of the book and Strachey's own stature as a writer and historian. Was Strachey, after all, so important a figure, either in life or in literature, as to justify so grandiose a tombstone? In recent years, as Mr. Holroyd recognises, his reputation has sadly declined. The mocking spirit in which he regarded the Victorians, the romantic light in which he saw the Elizabethans, concealed much of their reality from him, and he would get very few marks from scholars like Dr. Elton who believe that the writing of history should be strictly reserved to professionals. Wit, high spirits, an acute sense of the absurdity of life are perhaps qualities which an historian may be better without, if he wishes to see things *wie sie eigentlich gewesen sind*, even though perhaps most modern historians dispense with them rather too easily. Is it not possible that, in devoting so much attention to one who was after all only a minor figure, Mr. Holroyd has fundamentally misconceived his subject and tried bravely but vainly to make an eagle out of a butterfly?

It is only fair to ask such questions because Mr. Holroyd's book inevitably provokes them. But it is only fair to add that he himself is aware of them and tries to answer them honestly, even if not always to our satisfaction. And one should also say that, despite any doubts one may retain, they do nothing to destroy the continuous interest which his book inspires, and that to some of them at least there is a perfectly good answer.

[1] *Lytton Strachey: The Unknown Years 1880–1910*, Vol. I, 63s. *The Years of Achievement, 1910–1932*, Vol. II, 84s. Heinemann.

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It is, for instance, a perfectly good justification for the length of his book that Strachey was not merely an individual but an intensely social animal, passionately and intimately bound up with a peculiarly closely knit society which had a deep, and in some ways a permanent influence on English life. Mr. Holroyd's book is not only a biography but also a social history and a history of ideas, and as such it is, I think, extremely successful. Equally, whatever one's judgment of Strachey as a writer or an historian, there can be no doubt of the influence he exercised, not only on the remarkable group of people in which he played a dominating part, but, through his books, on a far wider circle. He was one of those who helped to fashion the image which an entire generation formed of itself and of its immediate past, and even though the image may have been a false one, it still contributes to our own view of the world. Whether Strachey was just or unjust to the Victorians, whether or not he distorted them for his own and our amusement, we shall never quite see them again as we should have if he had never written.

In considering Strachey as an historian, it is important to remember that he wrote of the Victorians not as of a race and an age which were dead and gone but as of people and ideas which lingered on into his own day. They might have been elderly members and friends of his own family and indeed his attitude towards them was very much that of a man engaged in a family quarrel which, however bitter, does not altogether exclude affection and amusement. And if their personal ghosts still lingered, this was even more true of their beliefs, which in Strachey's youth and even later, still made up the accredited code of the British middle class, and for the young constituted an intolerable burden, because the life which had once given them vitality had drained out of them. The great Victorian age was over, but its gigantic shadow still lay heavy on the land. It was Strachey's task to try and exorcise it, to conduct, with the sharpest of scalpels, a kind of surgical operation which would release his contemporaries from the umbilical cords which still bound them to their parents and grandparents. *Eminent Victorians*, says Cyril Connelly, "appeared to the post-war young people like the light at the end of a tunnel."

The house at 69, Lancaster Gate, which was Strachey's only permanent home from 1884 to 1909, that is to say, from the age of four to twenty-nine, might well have been taken as a symbol of the Victorian age in decline. Of gigantic size, it was absurdly designed and horribly ugly. "Size gone wrong," he wrote, "size pathological...."

> It was a house afflicted by elephantiasis that one found one had entered when having passed through the front doors and down the narrow dark passage with its ochre walls and its tesselated floor of magenta and indigo tiles, one looked upwards and saw the staircase twisting up its elongated shell—spiralling away into a thin infinity until far above one's surprised vision came upon a dome of pink and white glass, which yet one judged, with an unerring instinct, was not the top—no, not nearly, nearly, the top.

The house left Strachey with dark memories of depression, frustration, recurrent illness, and one cannot help wondering how much it coloured his vision of the Victorian age of which it was the monstrous child.

Yet his childhood was not an unhappy one. Born in 1880, the eleventh of thirteen children, he was the son of General Sir Richard Strachey, soldier, scientist, explorer, engineer, administrator, mathematician, Fellow of the Royal Society, who had played an extremely distinguished part in the government of British India. But the dominating parent was his mother, Jane Maria Grant, daughter of another, more aristocratic Anglo-Indian family, twenty-three years younger than her husband, intellectual, progressive, eccentric, a lover of literature and music, ambitious for her son, and the young Strachey was surrounded by as much love and care as any child could wish to have, and also by all the curious medicines, quinine and *Bemax* and *Sanatogen*, Extract of Malt, and *Dr. Gregory's Rhubarb Oil*, demanded by a nervous constitution and the congenital ill-health from which he suffered all his life. But as he grew up he found life at home oppressive and constricting; the absurd, gigantic, gloomy house; the long, silent family meals; the constant presence of innumerable brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins; in all this, there was something dreadfully missing. He longed for freer and fresher air, and also for something else to which for a long time he would not have been able to give a name.

It was not until he went to Cambridge in 1899, after a slightly eccentric schooling and a year at the University College of Liverpool, that Strachey found what he wanted, but then in such superabundance that his six years there, as an undergraduate and fellowship candidate, constituted the decisive period of his life. Cambridge was to him what the French Revolution was to Wordsworth:

> *Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,*
> *But to be young was very heaven,*

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and the comparison is not absurd, because, at the turn of the century, Strachey and his friends at Cambridge conceived of themselves as the precursors of a New Age of Reason, Enlightenment, and the Affections, which should be everything the old century had not been. Cambridge has given much to many people, but to few more than to Strachey. It was a springtime of friendship, of intellectual enquiry and of laughter, all infused with a sense that a new heaven and a new earth were coming to pass. In the society of his intellectual equals, he burgeoned and blossomed and gained confidence in his capacities and ambitions. Yet even Cambridge was in some respects a failure. Two seconds in the History Tripos and failure to win a fellowship at Trinity seemed to put the stamp of mediocrity on him, and the verdicts of his assessors were a foretaste of what academic critics were to repeat later about his published works.

THERE FOLLOWED long years of almost continuous wanderings from place to place, to wherever his friends were settled, broken by inevitable returns, because of financial dependence and recurrent illnesses, to family life at Lancaster Gate. Cambridge widened into Bloomsbury, he frequented artists and writers, and became at home in London's Bohemia. He made a small name for himself as a reviewer for the *New Statesman, The Spectator,* and other periodicals, and wrote an admirable little book on French literature for the Home University Library. Lady Ottoline Morrell, like some great, gay, garish macaw, with a shrieking voice as extraordinary as Strachey's piping falsetto (a tape-recording of their conversation would sound like the interior of an aviary), brought an exotic and aristocratic touch into the essentially bourgeois world of the intellectual. The war confirmed him in his belief in the incorrigible stupidity of his fellow creatures, and strengthened his resolve to do something to combat it. At last he even found a resting place of his own, together with Dora Carrington, bobbed, boyish and virginal, who offered him all the services and affections of a mother-mistress-housekeeper-boyfriend, without ever being truly any of them. But in all this there was nothing to fulfil the promise of Cambridge or to reveal, except to his intimate friends, the ambition of an artist determined to change the world by his pen since he had no taste or talent for the sword. Up to 1921, when he was over forty, he was no more than a minor man of letters. Then *Eminent Victorians* was published and, like Byron, Strachey woke up one morning and found himself famous.

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ANDRE DEUTSCH

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IN RECENT YEARS, we have had a flood, indeed almost a surfeit of books which are either directly or indirectly concerned with the Cambridge-and-Bloomsbury world of which Lytton Strachey was, as it were, one of the founding fathers. Sir Roy Harrod's *Life of John Maynard Keynes* was published in 1951; since then we have had the reminiscences of David Garnett, Leonard Woolf, and Kingsley Martin, the magnificent first volume of Lord Russell's autobiography, an excellent study, *Journey to the Frontier*, by two young American scholars, Lady Ottoline Morrell's *Diaries* and a mass of other material, articles, radio broadcasts, television interviews, which in one way or another have increased our knowledge and understanding. There is, we feel, hardly any society which, if we want to, we could know so well. We know its triumphs and its failures, its scandal and its gossip, exactly when and where who said what to whom, and we can even accept the air of mutual admiration and self-congratulation which breathed through it all because after all there were good grounds for it. A society whose members produced, or helped to produce, Russell's *Principles of Mathematics* and Moore's *Principia Ethica*, the novels of E. M. Forster and Virginia Woolf, Strachey's *Eminent Victorians* and *Queen Victoria*, Keynes' *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, besides a host of minor works, was more than an academic or literary coterie, and its achievements rest on a more solid basis than tea parties and gossip.

But its influence was not limited to that of such enduring literary monuments. We must also take into account the revolution in English artistic taste inspired by Clive Bell and Roger Fry and their followers and imitators. *Modern Art* and *Vision and Design*, the productions of the Omega workshops, the paintings of Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell are not great masterpieces. They may even look pretty thin and insubstantial now, but in the 1920s and '30s they had an influence which persists even today and many a suburban interior still reveals a yearning after Significant Form.

Yet not all of Strachey's friends in Cambridge or London either had, or aspired to have, original talent or hoped to make a creative contribution to the life of their time. Many of the most intelligent of his Cambridge contemporaries went into government service; "I think it distressing the way in which the civil service swallows nearly all the best Cambridge men," G. M. Trevelyan wrote to Keynes. Keynes himself went into the India Office and his first published work was *Indian Currency and Finance*, published in 1913, when at the age of twenty-eight he was appointed to the Royal Commission on that subject. Leonard Woolf, the first of a series of brother-confessors to Strachey, joined the Ceylon Civil Service. Ralph Hawtrey went first to the Education Office, together with A. R. Ainsworth and Robin Mayor, and later to the Treasury where he rejoined his Cambridge friends, Theodore Llewellyn Davies and the enigmatic Saxon Sydney-Turner. Others became lawyers, dons, schoolmasters, or heads of colleges; Ralph Wedgwood became Chairman of the Great Western Railway. It would be very hard to estimate the total sum of their practical contribution to English life, but it is certainly not an insignificant one. And it seems somehow quite natural that an American economist, Robert Lekachman, should write of the period from 1920 to 1950 as *The Age of Keynes*. At one end of the scale Strachey and his friends carried the banner of revolt but at the same time they were also pillars of the establishment.

WHAT KIND OF intellectual and emotional outlook did these young men take with them from Cambridge into the practical world? Knowing what was to come later one cannot help feeling that there was something immensely pathetic, almost tragic about them as they set out to face

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the long littleness of life. We cannot doubt, from their own accounts and those of others, that Cambridge had been the most formative period in their lives, and Cambridge had given them faith in the supreme power of reason, in the virtue of absolute intellectual and emotional honesty, and of complete frankness in personal relations. Highly intelligent and highly sophisticated, they were also imbued with the innocence of an immense optimism, which today would not be thought compatible with either sophistication or intelligence.

They also thought that nowhere were the values they believed in so completely realised as in Cambridge; Oxford, by contrast, only worshipped the vulgarity of worldly success. Anything that came after Cambridge, even Bloomsbury, could be nothing better than a comedown, and their tasks—ruling an Empire, administering its finances, directing its education —were necessarily only a second best. His friends thought that in Keynes, despite his intellectual brilliance, there was a deep streak of vulgarity, something rather common and comic, because of his passionate interest in public affairs and his talent for making money on the Stock Exchange.

The man who was the high priest and prophet of this esoteric religion (or rather anti-religion, for God was still one of the dark superstitions which impeded the march of human progress) was the philosopher G. E. Moore, author of its Bible, *Principia Ethica*. Today it is almost impossible to understand the fervour, almost the frenzy, inspired by Moore in some of his followers, few of whom understood him correctly. It was the personal influence of a saint rather than the rational one of a philosopher, and he himself seemed a living demonstration of the truth of his own ethical doctrines, in which the virtue of uncompromising honesty played so large a part. "I don't think you like me, Moore," said Russell, in the course of a philosophical discussion with him. There was a long pause while Moore meditated. Then "No," he replied, and the discussion continued as before. To Strachey, as to others, though to few with quite the same force, friendship with Moore and acquaintance with his philosophical doctrines came with the impact of a divine revelation. When *Principia Ethica* was published, he wrote to Moore:

> I think your book has not only wrecked and shattered all writers on Ethics from Aristotle and Christ to Herbert Spencer and Mr. Bradley, it has not only laid the true foundation of Ethics, it has not only left all modern philosophy *baffouée*. These seem to me small achievements compared to the establishment of that *Method* which shines like a sword between the lines. It

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As Moore had his Gospel, so also he had, literally, his Apostles, in the almost secret society of that name, of which Tennyson and Hallam had been among the earliest members, and Strachey was secretary from 1900 to 1901. Membership of the Society was, if not the greatest, certainly the smartest intellectual distinction Cambridge had to offer and many a young man's life has been blighted because he was not elected to it. It was like a judgment that, in the world of fashionable intellect, one had not quite made the grade. The kudos of membership was all the greater, because of the secrecy which surrounded it and because, unlike more vulgar distinctions, it received no public recognition.

IN STRACHEY'S DAY, the Society was entering on one of the most intellectually fertile and stimulating periods in its history. No one has ever written that history. Perhaps such a task would be impossible, because of the obligation of secrecy by which its members were bound together: it would be as if the historian were to ask the Mafia to open its records, for the Society was, in fact, in Strachey's day, and for many years afterwards, a kind of intellectual but not wholly innocent Mafia. But if such a history were ever to be written, it would be a record of one of the strongest and most persistent strains in English intellectual life, in which the *genius loci* of Cambridge itself mingled with strictly eugenic factors; for the Society owed much to families, the Stracheys themselves, the Darwins, the Stephens, the Huxleys, which provide conspicuous examples of inherited intelligence. A genealogical table of the family relationships of members of the Society would look like an intellectual *Almanach de Gotha,* and in it Strachey and Keynes would have a very special place. One says Strachey and Keynes particularly because from 1900 onwards they dominated the Society and impressed upon it indelibly the marks of their own individual and very remarkable characters.

MR. HOLROYD has been able to add greatly to our knowledge, both of the Society and of its later extension into Bloomsbury, because of the use he has made of Lytton Strachey's correspondence. One of the real revelations of his book is that Strachey was a marvellous letter writer, never flagging in his interest either in himself or in his friends, combining the serious and the trivial in equal proportion, responsive both to the public and to the private life, mocking, malicious and with irrepressible high spirits which appear even when he is recounting his own woes. When, as one hopes, his collected correspondence is published, it is possible that it will entitle him to a higher and more permanent place in literature than any of his other works. But apart from its general interest, and high literary value, in one particular respect the correspondence adds to our knowledge in a way which to some readers may be startling and, whether startling or not, raises some interesting, if slightly awkward questions, not merely about Strachey himself, or about Cambridge, or Bloomsbury, but about English society as a whole.

Mr. Holroyd had been given permission by Strachey's executors to use his letters without restriction in whatever way he chose. It would have been impossible for him to use them honestly, as the most direct evidence of Strachey's personality and character, without accepting as the simplest and plainest of facts that not only was Strachey homosexual but his sexual feelings were a major interest in his life. In dealing with this aspect of Strachey's character, Mr. Holroyd is admirably frank, outspoken, and dispassionate, though one might infer from some of James Strachey's comments that even he had not been quite outspoken enough for the whole truth. But in general Mr. Holroyd simply accepts the fact of Strachey's homosexuality for what it was, as an active and powerful element in his personality, and one can only wish that other biographers, or autobiographers, when faced with similar facts would display a similar objectivity.

Strachey's homosexuality will not, of course, come as a surprise to anyone who knew him or his circle of friends. But what Mr. Holroyd's book makes clear is that he was by no means exceptional in his tastes, but was merely one among many others who shared them. Indeed, it is not too much to say that the prevailing emotional tone and climate of the society of which he was a part was a homosexual one, though of course this does not exclude the fact that there were many of its members who were not themselves homosexual. Strachey himself acknowledges this, as when, for instance, in writing to Keynes, as of some conspiratorial circle, he speaks of the day when people like themselves will be able to appear in their true colours: only, he thinks, it may be a hundred years before this is possible. Keynes also recognises the fact, though in more veiled terms than Strachey, because his words were meant for publication. "The Apostles," he says, "repudiated entirely customary morals, conventions and traditional wisdom. We were, that is to say, in the strict sense of the term immoralists." This might be taken to mean simply that the

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Apostles abjured conventional morality in general, in the same way, for instance, as Dr. Leach has recently asked us to; but in fact Keynes in using the word *immoralist* "in the strict sense of the term," was using it in the same sense as Gide in his novel of that name. Bertrand Russell, who was ten years older than Strachey, and did *not* share his tastes, is more explicit. In his autobiography he tells us:

> After my time the Society changed in one respect. There was a long drawn-out battle between George Trevelyan and Lytton Strachey, both members, in which Lytton Strachey was on the whole victorious. Since his time, homosexual relations between the members were for a time common, but in my day they were unknown.

Strachey, if he had lived to read these words, would have put his own gloss upon them. He had convinced himself, after studying the Society's papers, that many of its past members had been secret and non-practising homosexuals. But in his view, according to Mr. Holroyd:

> In these unenlightened times some of them had not even been fully aware of their predilections and lived out lives of miserable twilight celibacy. Now, in the new uninhibited age of reason heralded by Moore, all this was to be altered.

In his proselytising zeal, Strachey found a willing ally and abettor in Keynes. The correspondence between the two friends is largely concerned with both the higher and the lower aspects of homosexual life, and with their efforts and intrigues to turn the meetings of the Society into a love fest. The letters are also a record of a protracted comedy of sexual errors, which was nevertheless extremely painful to Strachey, in which he and Keynes actively competed for the favours of any intelligent and good-looking young man who happened to be around. They were alive to every scent, but Keynes usually got there first. First of all, they engineered together the election to the Society of Edgar Duckham, a freshman at Clare, with whom they were both in love and contended bitterly for the honour of being his proposer: Keynes won. Then Strachey fell in love with the tall, elegant, exquisite yet slightly absurd Bernard Swithinbank, an undergraduate at Balliol, who had been Keynes' greatest friend at Eton; later, his passion for Swithinbank was overwhelmed by his even more desperate and violent feelings for his cousin, Duncan Grant. Here again he confided all these feelings to Keynes: only to discover, to his consternation and despair, that Duncan Grant was in love with Keynes and Keynes was in love with him

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and that they had shacked up together in a house in London.

THE HISTORY OF Strachey's relations with Keynes, and of the relations of both with the young men who caught their fancy, both in Cambridge and Oxford, makes up a marvellous tragi-comedy, a kind of intricate ballet of the affections, in which Keynes, ruthless, serpentine and slightly mephistophelean, invariably comes off best. Mr. Holroyd allows us to follow it in detail in their correspondence, surely one of the oddest that has ever been published between two men of such distinction, and reading it even today one cannot but be taken slightly aback by the unabashed frankness with which the two friends and rivals reveal the physical and erotic basis of their interest in the young men who successively captured their attention. In an angry attack on Keynes in the Society after the discovery of his affair with Duncan Grant, Strachey described him as "lascivious without lust," but there is both lasciviousness and lust in their letters to each other, and their tone, on occasions, would be no less unpleasant if the object of Strachey's and Keynes' affections had been young women rather than young men.

Mr. Holroyd warns us not to take the obscenities scattered throughout the letters too literally. They seem, he says, "to uncover a state of affairs within Cambridge which would have provoked curiosity in Gomorrah and caused the inhabitants of Sodom to sit up and take notice." But this, he suggests, was largely, in their Cambridge days, a matter of smoke rather than fire. "To 'propose' would seem to indicate little more than the slightly ambiguous pressure of one hand on another; to 'rape' or even to 'bugger' usually means a peck on the cheek, or a dubious embrace." Mr. Holroyd does not tell us how he knows this. Probably he is right, but somehow his warning misses the point. It is not the acts, or the physical details, which are referred to that provoke distaste, so much as the tone and manner of the reference. Sometimes, in these letters, one feels as if the ethical principles of Moore had been degraded into a giggle. Moore, of course, had behind him a long and distinguished Platonic tradition, which had already taken esoteric forms in Cambridge; but perhaps none quite so queer as those which it was given by Moore's would-be followers and disciples.

The point is, I think, of some importance because the kind of attitudes revealed in the correspondence were also the kind of attitudes which Strachey and Keynes were anxious to propagate, not only in the restricted Society of Cambridge but in society at large; they were, they felt, a part of the work of liberation and emancipation of which the world was so much in need, and undoubtedly they established an intellectual and personal domination over their contemporaries at Cambridge which set the tone of undergraduate life for many years to come. It would probably be true to say that it lasted until the early '30s, when events had begun to make the gospel according to Moore look somewhat inadequate.

It may, however, strike the reader that neither Strachey nor Keynes, in fact, paid more than lip-service to Moore; as Mr. Holroyd says, they took from him what they wanted. There was something selective and idiosyncratic about their interpretation of his ethical philosophy; Russell says that

> they conceived of the good as the passionate mutual admiration of a clique of the élite. This doctrine, quite unfairly, they fathered upon G. E. Moore, whose disciples they professed to be.

Nothing could have been more alien to the saintly Moore than the methods by which Strachey and Keynes urged on the Apostles the claims to election of a Duckham; absolute honesty would have required them to confess that it was all because of the colour of his yellow hair. But Moore had left them a loophole which they did not fail to exploit. For them, the crucial passage in *Principia Ethica* was contained in its last and possibly weakest chapter, on "The Ideal."

> By far the most valuable things, which we know or can imagine, are certain states of consciousness which may be roughly described as the pleasures of human intercourse and the enjoyment of beautiful objects. No one, probably, who has ever asked himself the question has ever doubted that personal affection and the appreciation of what is beautiful in Art and Nature are good in themselves.

As Keynes said, the unworldliness of the last pages of *Principia Ethica* is such that, by comparison, the New Testament is a handbook for politicians; even so, he and his friends found in it a complete justification for their sexual proclivities. How could the pleasures of human intercourse and the enjoyment of what is beautiful be more fully realised at one and the same time than by falling in love with Swithinbank? The almost hysterical admiration inspired by Moore in some of his Cambridge followers was based on the fact that he gave them philosophical reasons for doing what they in any case wanted to do on totally different grounds. But how far was Moore himself affected by the thought that his ethical principles must make room for the behaviour of his friends?

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THERE WAS then a certain duplicity, something ambivalent and ambiguous in the image presented, if not to each other, at least to the world by the Apostles and their heirs and successors. This in itself had certain consequences, of which one was an attitude of exclusiveness towards the world and the concerns of ordinary men and women, who were unable to rise to the heights of The Ideal. All Cambridge and Bloomsbury could do was to wait for the New Age which would dawn when Reason had done her part and until then cultivate the garden of their own sensibilities. To this rule, of course, there were notable exceptions; Keynes himself, always aware of practical considerations; Leonard Woolf, with his belief in democratic socialism; Russell, conscious of the social obligations entailed by superior intellect. But even they perhaps might have admitted under pressure that, in the last resort, these were inferior occupations compared with the pursuit of abstract truth and the cultivation of the affections.

The kind of security measures practised by Cambridge and Bloomsbury in regard to the world outside are easily understandable in view of the legal, and social, disabilities imposed upon the homosexual. After all, at the turn of the century it was only ten years since the trial and conviction of Oscar Wilde, which had given a kind of traumatic shock to English society. Indeed, in such circumstances it is less surprising that Strachey and his friends concealed in public what they practised and propagated in private than that they should have achieved such a remarkable degree of openness in their own relations with each other; in an age, after all, when in the tower of Trinity A. E. Housman was nursing in solitude and bitterness his secret and abortive love of Adelbert Jackson.[2]

What is surprising, however, and less easily understandable, is that in the intervening years, in which private attitudes to homosexuality have fundamentally changed, and even the legal sanctions against them have been significantly diminished, it does not seem to have occurred to some of those who have written about Strachey or Keynes or their friends that the homosexuality which played such a powerful part in their lives was worth even a passing mention. Mr. Leonard Woolf, for instance, himself a disciple of Moore's, and as an undergraduate a confidant of Strachey's, has in his autobiography written at considerable length, and with deep feeling, of his undergraduate days, of Strachey, of Keynes, of the Apostles,

[2] Laurence Housman, "A. E. Housman's 'De Amicitia'" (edited by John Carter), in ENCOUNTER, October 1967.

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of Bloomsbury, in which he was a leading figure; from his account one would never guess that sexual deviation had any relevance to such subjects. The two young American authors of *Journey to the Frontier* have investigated the social, intellectual, and family background of their two heroes, Julian Bell and John Cornford, with the assiduity of explorers who have discovered an unknown country; but among the many strange plants they have brought home with them, homosexuality is not one. Sir Roy Harrod, in his long and authoritative *Life of Keynes,* of whom he was himself a friend and disciple, in addition to describing Keynes' achievement as an economist and public servant, also does full justice to him *als Mensch,* as a connoisseur of the arts, as a friend, teacher, husband to Lydia Lopokova, College bursar, Stock Exchange speculator, writer, Apostle; Sir Roy does not seem to have regarded Keynes' homosexual activities as of the slightest importance or interest. One might multiply such a list almost indefinitely; indeed, it is fair to say that, if one were to approach the world of Cambridge and Bloomsbury as a stranger, and one's knowledge of it were confined to published sources, one might quite honestly and reasonably assume that homosexuality played no part in it at all.

How does one explain this curious oversight, if oversight indeed it is, rather than *suppressio veri*? Did Leonard Woolf and others really not notice what Strachey or Keynes did not trouble to conceal from their friends, and indeed gloried in, as a higher form of love than the love of women; or did they simply think it a triviality not worth mentioning, or at least not to those who did not share in Apostolic mysteries? Did all Sir Roy Harrod's researches, his own friendship with Keynes, the other friends he consulted, never reveal to him the key to his hero's emotional life? Of course, if Sir Roy had been writing about Keynes simply as an economist, such a question would not arise; but he was also writing about Keynes as a person and an individual, and to ignore the whole of a man's sexual life is hardly to give a true portrait of him.

One would be doing rather less than justice to such writers and scholars if one were to suppose that so notable an omission arose out of ignorance, oversight, or plain inability to see what lay under their noses. One must conclude rather that it was due to respect for the reputation of others, some still living, reluctance to give offence to the feelings of friends and relations, a sense perhaps that the whole subject of homosexuality is so open to misinterpretation that even to mention it would provoke prejudice and hostility. There are many worthy motives which make historians or biographers feel justified in telling rather less than the truth, and no doubt they do credit to them as human beings. But how much at variance they seem with Strachey's own aims and practice as a biographer! How much, in this case, they seem to reveal a new form of official, or academic, hypocrisy equivalent to the hypocrisy with which the Victorians veiled the secrets of their own lives! And how very little, it would seem, considering the astonishing frankness of Strachey's own correspondence and conversation, we have advanced since then towards discarding the prejudices which made so much of Strachey's own emotional life a history of frustration and unhappiness. The effect is all the more ironic because here, for whatever reason, conventional prejudice has operated to blur the truth about a section of society at precisely one of the points at which it was most admirable; that is to say, the belief or the hope that the life of the passions can flourish only in an air which has been purified by sweet, unprejudiced Reason.

Fortunately, Mr. Holroyd's book has now made it impossible to write again about Strachey and his circle without accepting the fact, and its importance, of the part which homosexuality played in their lives. But in doing so, it raises issues which are rather wider than Cambridge or Bloomsbury, and the influence, or the kind of influence, which they exercise. For one would, of course, be wrong if one supposed that, in the recent past, homosexuality had flourished only in Cambridge and there only under Strachey's or Keynes' influence; or that the kind of *suppressio veri* which one finds in Harrod's *Life of Keynes* had not been practised also in respect of other persons, periods and places. We have, for instance, recently had a much praised autobiography by a distinguished Oxford don who, in an otherwise admirable account of Oxford in the 1920s and '30s, apparently entirely overlooked that, as John Betjeman recently cried on a radio programme: "But *everybody* was queer at Oxford in those days!" Mr. Betjeman, of course, exaggerated but there was truth as well as exaggeration in his remark. It would be fair to say that, as in Strachey's Cambridge, so in Oxford in the '20s and early '30s homosexuality was, among undergraduates and dons with pretensions to culture and a taste for the arts, at once a fashion, a doctrine, and a way of life, and, as with the Apostles, exercised an influence which extended far beyond the boundaries of the university. It could, of course, be

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said that no more people were affected by it than are today addicted to marihuana, LSD or Flower Power, and the comparison would be just, because homosexuality was very largely the particular form which the revolt of the young took at the universities at that time. But the effect of a cult on an institution or a society is not limited to the number of its actual adherents, any more than the influence of Catholicism is restricted to those who go to Mass.

BUT WHAT PRECISELY has the effect been? Alas, we cannot tell, largely because the same principle of *suppressio veri* has applied at Oxford as it has at Cambridge; and indeed in London also, as we can see for instance from recently published diaries like those of Sir Harold Nicolson or Chips Channon, which take us as it were on an immense conducted tour of pre-war London society, on which none of the sights are omitted except one of the most prominent features of the landscape.

In the case of the universities, however, it has in other respects been taken for granted that until very recent times, perhaps even still today, the two older of them have had a decisive influence in shaping the intellectual, emotional and social outlook of the English governing classes. Efforts to reform them, to alter their class structure, to broaden their system of admission, have not been solely inspired by motives of egalitarianism; they have also been inspired by an awareness that, while the products of the older universities have enjoyed a near monopoly of posts of influence in the British establishment, they themselves may not be at all the kind of people we really need in those posts at the present time. What no one doubts is that the universities have set upon them their distinctive mark and stamp, and what this entails has been frequently and exhaustively analysed. Personal integrity, over-intellectualism, technical ignorance, class prejudice are some of the results which have been attributed to the form of higher education to which they have been subjected.

But what no one has said is, firstly, that between the two World Wars the dominant tone of the universities was deeply coloured by homosexuality. Secondly, that this has had a significant effect on those who received their higher education there, which continued long after they had left the universities and when they had come to positions of considerable power and influence. And thirdly, that the position occupied by such persons in English life has given them a distinctive and identifiable influence on English society as a whole.

Of course, no one has said this because on the whole there is no reliable or verifiable evidence

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for saying it; if one looks where one thinks one would be most likely to find it, in memoirs, letters, diaries, reminiscences, autobiographies, one meets with an almost complete blank, so complete indeed as only to inspire further speculation. And if one looks for any kind of statistical evidence, anyone who has looked at the Wolfenden report will realise how dreadfully shaky and incomplete our knowledge is. It would indeed be ironic if homosexual reform had achieved what success it has because in fact we did not know what we were doing.

In such matters, therefore, one is driven to rely almost entirely on rumour, gossip, intuition and personal experience, which are of course very unsound counsellors. This is the direct result of the kind of historical conspiracy of silence which we have noticed in the case of pre-war Cambridge and Oxford. And might not that conspiracy itself be regarded as one of the characteristic features of English society during this century, a new form of that Victorian (and English) gift for obscuring the facts of life, against which Strachey and his friends raised Voltaire's cry of *Ecrasez l'Infâme!* Perhaps every age has its own hypocrisy, and perhaps this may have been the particular one of the first half of this century.

In this respect, indeed, we can register, in our own time, a small but positive advance. If, as has been suggested, drug addiction of various kinds plays for the young today something of the same kind of part as homosexuality before the war, then its devotees, in a similar climate of legal deterrents and social disapproval, display none of the same discretion as their predecessors in the revolt of youth. Rather, they advertise themselves to such an extent that they might almost be suspected of taking part in a well-planned publicity campaign. Strachey thought that it would take a hundred years before the Age of Reason would dawn; the Apostles of pot and LSD expect the walls of Jericho to fall overnight, and sometimes it almost seems as if they had.

Is it possible, therefore, that, despite the immense apparatus of research which has been deployed upon the study of English life and society in this century, there has been one important aspect of it which has been overlooked? How important, of course, we cannot know, until the gap has been filled. Moreover, the omission has extended not merely to history or sociology, but to literature. We have no great novelist like Proust who has recognised the *homme-femme* as an important and significant figure in modern society, nor any writer of the stature of Gide who has tried to expose and analyse this phenomenon in himself. Yet surely Henry James might have done as much for us. There is a good case for saying that the Wilde case, in 1890, gave a kind of shock to English society from which it has only recently begun to recover; if one were a Marxist, one would be tempted to relate it to that other traumatic experience when, in 1888, German steel production first exceeded Britain's. Perhaps the trauma is now over and we are at last beginning to see ourselves both as we really are and as others see us. Mr. Holroyd's book is in itself a portent and it is certain to have successors. Mr. Cuthbert Worsley's recently published *Flannelled Fool* is an admirable and touching autobiography which shows with great honesty how far homosexuality has affected not merely England's intellectuals but her muddied oafs as well.[3] Yet it remains true, paradoxically enough,

[3] See T. C. Worsley, *Flannelled Fool* (Alan Ross, 30s., 1967).

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that in this respect English writers have shown less courage and honesty than her lawyers, legislators and social reformers, and that a Virginia Woolf or an E. M. Forster have been more timid than a Leo Abse, MP.

RACE DAMNÉE, RACE MAUDITE, says Proust of the *homme-femme* at the beginning of *Sodom et Gomorrhe*. It is a sign of the great change that has taken place in public attitudes to homosexuality, that this is the one passage in all his immense novel which now seems hopelessly outdated. At the same time, one remembers that Proust, for all his honesty, could not quite face the fact that Albertine was a young man, and that this subterfuge entailed a heavy penalty. All the intricate and subtle analysis devoted to Marcel's relations with Albertine, which are essentially false ones, makes little impression on us, and Albertine remains a ghost compared with the Baron de Charlus, who is firmly rooted in the world of fact and not of fancy, whose relations with the Emperor William II would be worth an historian's note, and whose quarrel with Marcel himself is an affair of great literature.

The implications of Mr. Holroyd's book are very wide. They are so wide indeed that one could easily be tempted to fall into exaggeration, and on such a subject exaggeration is of all things to be avoided. One does not wish to say that homosexuals constitute a kind of Homintern which secretly rules (or ruled) English society, as the Mafia rules Sicily or WASPS rule America. One would simply like the facts in the case, presented in the same kind of way, and with the same regard for truth, as we have come to expect, in other matters, of any historian, biographer or memoirist in whom we feel we can place our trust. In this respect Mr. Holroyd has set a notable example and one hopes that others will follow. But until they do, one will have the uneasy feeling that a significant stratum of English social life is still to be uncovered.

At the end of his life, Strachey wrote, in a letter to Roger Senhouse, that after reading Dr. Malinowski on the sexual life of the Trobriand islanders, he felt much inclined to devote himself to a similar work on the sexual life of the English. How much one wishes he had been serious, and had lived to complete such a project; at the very least, it would have been marvellously amusing. Only it is still probable that, as Strachey added, it would have to be published in New Guinea.

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PRESS

The Future of Television Journalism

IN A LEADING ARTICLE on "A Free and Effective Press" *The Sunday Times* argued recently that for the British Press editorial problems were at least as important as commercial ones, and that the first of these was the relationship of newspapers to television. "This is a problem which is not yet fully resolved, though television has weaknesses which newspapers can exploit."

The Sunday Times (and anonymity concealed the hand of William Rees-Mogg, writing for the last time in those columns before leaving to edit *The Times*) went on:

> The great weakness of television is the brevity of its current affairs and news coverage. If it were read out loud on television the editorial matter of an average copy of *The Sunday Times* would fill twenty hours of screen time (it could be read through by a devoted reader in rather less than four hours). A newspaper, and particularly a Sunday newspaper, can turn the bare headlines of news events into a coherent and fully researched account of what happened, and what it might mean. Television, indeed, creates the interest which this fuller coverage can satisfy. The brief vivid snapshot, the actual sight of the people involved, the headline news or the inconclusive five-minute discussion, often make television coverage an aperitif for newspaper coverage in greater depth.

No journalist labouring in a medium which has been competing with the press for scarcely twenty years could be other than flattered at the attention newspapers now normally pay to television, and at the changes they have made in response to the new medium. It is salutary for once, therefore, to be put in one's proper place, a five-minute appetiser before the main course (and a four-hour main course at that).

But is the role of television journalism only to whet the appetite? Or can it, without any pretensions to replacing the press, at least aspire to providing an alternative menu of its own? The continuing recent argument about the future of newspapers has been more public but not more intense than a similar debate within television. And, in the end, it is the future of television journalism which may turn out to be the more important. Already (as a special survey conducted for the Independent Television Authority discussed) almost half the population "rely on television more than on newspapers to give them information about what is going on in the world."

That simple fact must be my excuse for considering television journalism as practised in Britain today and asking whether it could not be better done.

JEREMY ISAACS *is the young London television producer who was for many years responsible for some of the best television journalism on both ITV ("This Week") and BBC ("Panorama").*

TO LOOK BACK at what others have written in ENCOUNTER in the past is to be forcibly reminded that, for some, television journalism could scarcely be done worse.[1] I recall Henry Fairlie shaking the dust of the studio from his feet, and dismissing TV as "the Idiot Box." Fairlie complained, with some justice, that where pictures prevail ideas suffer. And later that year R. H. S. Crossman, after three months in hospital as a "Captive Viewer," compared TV current affairs very much to its disadvantage with radio. Each Thursday evening, Crossman told us, he listened to a sound radio discussion and watched *This Week* (ITV) and *Gallery* (BBC).

> As a result, I came to the conclusion that the only serious discussion took place on sound at 8.30. In half an hour, without the distraction of vision, three or four speakers can get down to business and deal with a topic. In *This Week* and *Gallery* on the other hand, most of the discussions seemed to last for seven or eight minutes and ended before anyone had time to say anything new. Anxious to retain his audience and aware (as I have been told so often) that no one ever listens to what is said on television, the producer hurried on to a film or an interview. To some extent this criticism applies to *Panorama*. Week after week the television critics write this programme up for its tremendous range and educational value. One has only to compare it with *From Our Own Correspondent* on BBC sound at 8.15 each Saturday morning to realise its shortcomings.

Crossman concluded that "as a medium for imparting information accurately and quickly to the attentive listener sound radio was intrinsically superior to television." Intrinsically? Perhaps; but the fact is that the criticism Cross-

[1] Henry Fairlie, "The Idiot Box," ENCOUNTER, March 1962; R. H. S. Crossman, "Thoughts of a Captive Viewer," ENCOUNTER, August 1962.

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man adduced of *This Week*, *Gallery*, and *Panorama* just after its heyday, were criticisms not of the medium itself, but of the use particular producers, at particular times, chose to make of it.

"I'M SORRY that's all we've time for" remain the most humiliating words uttered on television. They are not heard as often as they used to be. When they are they still grate.[2]

Did television producers ever really believe that seven or eight minutes was as long as one could hope to hold the audience's attention with a "serious" item? Alas, yes! A look back at the earliest contents files of *This Week* or *Panorama* is revealing. It was nothing for *This Week* when it started over ten years ago to cram five or six items into half an hour. *Panorama*, with admittedly more time at its disposal, was no less generous in its offering. Take, for example, the celebrated occasion in June 1956 when Malcolm Muggeridge interviewed a drunken Brendan Behan, from whose lips the most familiar of four-letter words fell like autumn leaves in a Force 9 gale. This was *Panorama*'s bill of fare:

> *1. Introduction.* Richard Dimbleby introduced the programme. He explained that the subject matter of the chosen lead story was to come up in Parliament; *Panorama* was prohibited from discussing it by the operation of the 14-day rule.
>
> *2. Cyprus.* Woodrow Wyatt chaired a discussion between Julian Amery and Richard Crossman.
>
> *3. Personal Columns.* Max Robertson presented an item about a personal column advertisement. "Accommodation in private house required for debutante deportment classes." Robertson interviewed Lady Tarbat who had inserted the advertisement, and three of her charges.
>
> *4. Civil Defence.* Richard Dimbleby conducted a discussion on Civil Defence, with Brigadier Fernyhough and Lieut.-Col. Slade of the War Office.
>
> *5. Brendan Behan.* Two extracts from "The Quare Fellow" were performed in the studio. Malcolm Muggeridge then interviewed Behan.
>
> *6. Paris Inventors' Exhibition.*[3] By Eurovision *Panorama* visited the Paris Inventors' Exhibition to see a car that could tilt on its nose, a cigarette that could be put down on a table-cloth without burning it, and a patent shoe-horn for fat men.

It is not difficult to see why anyone seriously interested in current affairs might turn up his nose at such a programme. Yet the mixture of information, opinion, and entertainment it purveyed was typical of the BBC's most prestigious essay in journalism of those days. That particular edition of *Panorama* even fulfilled one of television's own criteria for success in current affairs: it made headlines, instead of following them.

In 1957 BBC TV acquired another window on the world—*Tonight*, a daily magazine programme which deliberately mixed information and entertainment and made the lighter style its own. *Panorama* was freed to concentrate on bigger issues, and (with Michael Peacock as Editor) began to do so. Peacock employed reporters with talents as considerable as John Freeman, Woodrow Wyatt, Robert Kee, James Mossman, Robin Day, and Richard Dimbleby himself. *Panorama* now established a style of vivid forceful reporting which, at its best, has probably never been bettered on British television. Freeman and Wyatt on the ETU, Kee in Algiers, Day in the Congo, Mossman in the Middle East—the highlights remain in the memory (the *longueurs* mercifully recede).

HOW GOOD, I WONDER, would even those *Panoramas* look today? In the early 1960s, when Richard Crossman found it so unsatisfying, was the programme intended to inform, to entertain, or to do both?

Few clues remain, but Robin Day, in his book appropriately entitled *Television—a Personal Report*, is at least aware of the difficulty. Day, writing in 1961, admitted that television's serious coverage of topical issues was inadequate.

> But [he argued] there is a limit to the reasonable man's capacity to watch programmes about nuclear strategy, disarmament, trades unions or underdeveloped countries. TV coverage of such matters must, if it is to have the maximum value, be short, crisp and entertaining. By entertaining I do not mean slick or sensational but vivid, human and lively.

That is the confusion precisely. For the problem is not to deal, to take just one of Mr. Day's examples, with "nuclear strategy" and remain short, crisp, and entertaining (however you define entertaining). The problem is to deal with nuclear strategy adequately. And you cannot do that briefly, crisply, and entertainingly on television or anywhere else.

[2] The Chairman of one ITV Company used to forbid their use on his programmes. Unfortunately, he did not also ensure that the time available for discussion rendered the phrase redundant.

[3] *Panorama*'s producer, incidentally, was anxious to end the Behan interview early because of his language, but the French technicians refused to go ahead in advance of the agreed time, suspecting some kind of "perfidious Albion" trick on the part of the BBC.

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Since Robin Day wrote this a good deal has changed. ITV's *This Week* has shown from 1964 that a weekly news magazine programme could devote its entire running time, half an hour, to one topic without losing its audience. And *Panorama*, in the last two years, has sometimes devoted 50 minutes of peak time—not quite *Sunday Times* dimensions, but rather more substantial than an appetiser—to subjects as severe as U.S. Foreign Policy, Canada, Mental Illness, and even the Anti-Missile Missile—to say nothing of such running sores as Viet Nam, Rhodesia, the Middle East, and the Economy. At their current best neither *Panorama* nor *This Week* is susceptible to the criticisms levelled against them five years ago.

But, since there is still room for improvement, it may be worth examining the factors which limit the achievements of television journalism. These are not all inherent in the medium; most are contingent on how it is used and organised, due, in Fred Friendly's phrase, to "circumstances *within* our control."

PRINCIPALLY they are: the structure of the BBC and of ITV; the pressures of competition for an audience; the aims and ambitions of the programme-makers themselves.

In both BBC and ITV, for quite different reasons, "News" and "Current Affairs" are distinct and separate. In the BBC, where television itself is only an off-shoot from an older radio trunk, it just growed that way, Television News stemming from Radio News, Television Current Affairs from Television Talks. Both come under *Editor, News and Current Affairs* (ENCA), who is also responsible for the BBC's vast radio news and current affairs output. ENCA has, unlike other departmental heads in the BBC, direct access to the Director-General. But he is chiefly occupied with high policy matters, to which senior officials in the BBC habitually devote a great deal of their time. ENCA presides over a weekly meeting, significantly at Broadcasting House, not at the Television Centre, which discusses policy and attempts to co-ordinate coverage. Here, once a week, HOAG (*Tel*)—*Head of Current Affairs Group Television*—and *Editor Television News* meet. But, apart from this weekly physical contact (at a meeting where radio men predominate) and telephone conversations when necessary, there is virtually no co-ordination between Television News and Current Affairs. Different groups of journalists, in different parts of London, pursue different ends.

This is a striking and remarkable fact which, in my view, has affected the whole character of BBC television journalism. At least in part it explains why much television current affairs still pursues entertainment as a goal.

Even more extraordinary, BBC Television News remains, largely, a satellite of Radio News. In the United States the television news services—*CBS*, *NBC*, *ABC*—developed from existing radio networks. Today, naturally, they dominate their steam radio partners. Reporters owe their first loyalty to the television news programmes.

But for many BBC reporters radio still comes first, television second. At home, specialist correspondents serving both masters have easy access to the television studio. Abroad, the BBC maintains a chain of reporters who daily send half-a-dozen messages for radio before turning to the demands of TV. For them the studio is "wired" for sound, the circuit comes up on cue, the microphone voice is second nature. But the camera, to the same reporter, is a strange clumsy device, dragging its victims away from the telephone into the streets, consuming, with mechanical dithers and delays, valuable time needed to reconsider that final sentence before meeting the next radio deadline. TV News derives too little benefit from the BBC's foreign correspondents, while TV Current Affairs, rather than overload further the already overburdened resident, sends roving reporters out from London on rushed assignments or costly casual tours.

BBC TELEVISION NEWS, it seems to me, consistently plays Cinderella to two big sisters, Radio News and Television Current Affairs. It misses the prestige of the best current affairs programmes, and falls short in speed and flexibility of radio. Above all, BBC Television News lacks scope. Anyone who studies BBC News must be struck by its valuable insistence on accurate information, lucidly presented. Anyone who has read the background papers written, "for guidance only," by the BBC's specialist correspondents, soon realises *how little that is available of significant information or perceptive comment ever reaches the screen*. BBC correspondents have more to say than is ever discerned from the television news bulletins, served up as they are, not by a commentator, nor even by a reporter, but by a newsreader, presenting a reader's digest.[4]

Speed and accuracy, vital for any news service, are not in themselves sufficient to fulfil the whole journalistic function. News is not just

[4] Recently specialist correspondents have begun to play a more prominent role in news bulletins (notably on the devaluation of sterling) and on BBC-2 a new half-hour news programme, *Newsroom*, has started, presented by news reporters.

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what the news-reader tells us is now known. News is also the considered answer to the questions which a good reporter asks. Television journalism, if it is to realise its full potential, should take thought to ask and time to answer pertinent questions of its own.

THIS, ONE MIGHT HAVE thought, would be the principal objective of a current affairs group which set out to be complementary to a straight news service. And here, I believe, judged as it deserves to be judged by the highest standards, television journalism fails.

The BBC Television Current Affairs Group has so far failed to treat major topics with the authority of the best of America's *CBS Reports* or *NBC White Papers*. It has relied instead on regular topical magazines, principally *Panorama, Tonight* and now *24 Hours*.

THE AUTHORITY of the best American television journalism derives, as with American newspapers, from the status, experience and responsibility of the journalists who practise it. It is significant, I believe, that American television reporters are newsmen by origin and training, lending their judgment to the content of the programmes in which they appear. But the shape matters too; Edward R. Murrow, picking one topic that mattered and devoting his programme to it, was infinitely more effective than he would ever have been linking a magazine.

The magazine format—*Panorama* weekly, *24 Hours* nightly—has several advantages: it ensures a quick flexible response to the news and it provides variety, promising an item, perhaps, for every taste. But magazine journalism has this limitation; it militates against allocating maximum resources to particular projects. Keeping options open may make day to day decision taking easier, but it also dissipates energies, and burkes necessary choices. A regular programme devoted to one subject, on the other hand, has the advantages of allowing increased time to increasingly complex issues; it also enables the producer to assign everything he's got in the way of research, reporters, film effort to the one topic of his choice, and stand or fall by how he handles it.

It can take months to research, weeks to film, days to edit a television programme which aspires to any degree of thoroughness in treating a selected subject. Take that decision in television and you necessarily sacrifice something of topicality. Is topicality the journalist's only shrine? If one worships at it nightly, need one do so weekly as well? Some, alas, would say yes, every time.

The BBC, with a new news magazine, *24 Hours*, making the running nightly, still jibs at the one subject formula for *Panorama*. I edited *Panorama* for eighteen months from the autumn of 1965 and I found it impossible, for a variety of reasons (some of them no doubt my own failings) to persuade BBC programme planners that the most sensible role for a weekly programme in the present crowded schedules was to take a considered look at one major topic.

Panorama reverted instead to the old multi-subject formula, so that slimming-cures, sunken treasure, unidentified flying objects and suchlike have appeared from time to time as make-weight fillers, sugar-coating for the current affairs pill.

It is argued in their favour that television journalism need not take itself too seriously. Perhaps not; yet so much of television is already, in intention at any rate, entertaining that it seems unnecessary for television journalism also to pursue amusement as a goal. Yet it undoubtedly does.

The current affairs magazine *24 Hours*, to cite only the most publicised of innumerable possible examples, responded to de Gaulle's "*Vive le Quebec Libre*" speech by sending up the General. Parodist John Wells did a satire-show imitation of de Gaulle as Louis XIV. *Le Monde* reported that great exception was taken in French official circles to this indignity offered on a "responsible" BBC news programme. But *24 Hours* is explicitly part informative, part entertaining. (The endearing Cliff Michelmore would scarcely be anyone's first choice to link a hard news programme.) This ambivalence is a fact which British viewers have grown to accept, but which others still find confusing.

24 Hours replaced, and largely derived from, *Tonight*. It was born at the behest of Paul Fox, then HEAD (*Tel*) (now Controller—Channel 1) who made no secret of his dislike for the whimsy and irreverence of *Tonight*, and wanted a new magazine which would deal in harder news but would, of course, be just as popular. *24 Hours* is an enormously successful programme which still bears the marks of its origin. (Its first editor, Derrick Amoore, edited *Tonight*.) *24 Hours* often reacts rapidly and effectively to major news. But when the news is not so dominating the programme's touch is less deft, less sure for example than that of radio's *Ten O'clock* or even *The World at One*. *24 Hours* aims, at its sometimes embarrassing worst, between journalism and entertainment, and hits the target.

The programme has become noticeably "harder" in its approach since the advent of ITV's *News at Ten* but that a nightly news

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magazine should strive to be facetious at all seems to me to derive from an awareness of being "not just a news service," from the determination at all costs not to be "dull," from an over-riding desire to be "different." It is the ethos if you like of "pop" journalism, of the *Daily Express*, or the *Mirror*. What it is not is journalism which sees thorough reporting and considered analysis as ends in themselves.

THAT IS the glaring gap. On BBC Television at the moment—and it hurts this television journalist to concede it—there is no incentive to consider well-researched current affairs journalism at all. There are of course television documentaries, personalised essays, historical complications, virtuoso *jeux d'esprit*. But these, with very occasional exceptions, do not deal with current affairs. The BBC purchases current affairs documentaries made by CBS, NBC, and other organisations. It does not make them itself.

The reason is simple and astonishing: they cannot exist. Current affairs and documentaries come in different categories. End of argument.

The Corporation, as Stuart Hood once pointed out in a memorable article[5] in these pages, harbours *apparatchiks* who easily become obsessed with the ideology of power. Proposals for change advanced by juniors in the hierarchy are seen first as moves to alter the structure of the organisation, strategic attempts to advance the bounds of this empire, and diminish those of another. In these arguments terminological dogma, protecting as it does the *status quo*, becomes a substitute for thought.

Thus it is impossible to persuade certain BBC comrades that any journalism—let alone good journalism—can involve lengthy preparation, research, assembly, consideration. The dogma, enshrined for all to see in the managerial structure, is simple. If it's quick—it's current affairs. If it takes a long time it isn't current affairs, it's documentary, and we'll leave that, if you don't mind, to the long-haired boys in Richard Cawston's Department....

OF COURSE television's ability to respond quickly to the pressure of events is arguably the most impressive journalistic virtue it possesses—although the Arab–Israeli war showed recently how much better radio could still do that (and will do until there are communication satellites everywhere). But the fact is that the other kind of journalism, the kind which depends on original research, is just as important. The BBC will not aim high enough until it attempts both.

To do so it will need to abandon the quibbling distinction between the techniques of current affairs and documentary. It will also need to rekindle an interest in ideas. The old Television Talks Department (led by the now legendary Grace Wyndham Goldie) is still remembered at Lime Grove as stimulating everyone who worked in it. Argument flourished, experiment was encouraged, opinions were provoked, criticisms debated. Today, by contrast, Lime Grove is an intellectual vacuum. Nuts and bolts are all.

The weekly meetings I attended of senior people in the Current Affairs Group seemed to me to exhibit an almost total lack of interest in the subject matter of current affairs. All discussion, when not confined to the trivia of Corporation protocol, was replaced by an Occam's razor of lethal simplicity—if not topical, not relevant. The headline became a substitute for thought. To film a story for more than a fortnight smacked of escapism; to schedule a topic for transmission a fortnight in advance, of subversion. Jolted into action themselves only by the news-flash, the nuts-and-bolts men distrusted the exercise of the individual editorial judgment that the week-end's main news story could safely be left by *Panorama* to the news bulletin or the nightly news magazine.

TO VENTURE behind or, worse still, ahead of the headlines was to add insubordination to eccentricity. Developments in community attitudes to mental illness were legitimised, just, by the topical peg—last refuge of the unimaginative—of National Mental Health Week. The Catholic Church's involvement in Revolutionary Latin America was resisted to the very edge of transmission. Californian technology and its sociological fall-out were successfully expelled beyond the current affairs pale. "Idea" was a four-letter word.

The result is that at the moment, even allowing for the increased output of other departments, the BBC gets the worst of two separate worlds. TV News, reliable and accurate, has neither time nor inclination to promote detailed research. TV Current Affairs, confused about its objectives and bothered by hardened categories, lacks the initiative which effective journalism should be seen to possess, and which it has space and time to deploy.

DOES SALVATION lie elsewhere? Independent Television began this summer the first British half-hour news, a development which must already have given the BBC cause for thought. Yet in ITV too, news and current affairs are artificially separate.

[5] Stuart Hood, "The Corporation," ENCOUNTER, April 1965.

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Independent Television News (ITN) was set up under the Television Act 1954 because the programme contractors, greedy men, it was thought, whom hope of gain allured, could not be trusted to provide an impartial news-service. Hence, properly screened from the pressures of profitability, ITN. But the individual programme companies were thought fit to make current affairs and documentary programmes, and some of them do.

ITN, within the limitations of the ten-minute bulletin, has, since its inception, provided an efficient news-service as reputable as the BBC's and less starchy. But the news, until now, has lacked space. The networking system, run by the principal contractors, denied ITN room on the air, and their representatives sitting on ITN's Board controlled the resources at its disposal.

Last summer the Independent Television Authority, ITA, achieved a long desired objective—a half-hour of news. Much was expected of this, the most striking new opportunity in television journalism for years. But *News at Ten* has, on the whole, disappointed. It is true that when a major news story is available on film it now gains the space it deserves on the screen. But, in spite of temporarily luring *The Economist*'s editor, Alastair Burnet, and Political Correspondent George Ffitch into lending their services, *News at Ten* is not a programme with a mind and a policy. It is merely a bulletin writ large. Five nights a week it transmits not just what the ten-minute news included, but also what it left out. Foreign film stories have developed a certain shape and style. The rest tends to be snippety. So far there is little sign of an attempt to use the extra space to relate events to issues, or to permit ideas to rear their unexpected heads.

Sometimes the aim seems to be only to tell more stories tonight than last night. Two minutes for ITN's sub-editors is a long, long time, four a drag, and ten, unless there's violent action to keep the viewer awake, an eternity. Indeed, if a television producer had taken *The Sunday Times'* strictures on "appetiser" journalism as a blueprint, he might well have produced *News at Ten*.

Meanwhile two ITV Companies, Rediffusion and Granada, provide weekly current affairs programmes, reflecting in their different ways the company persona: Granada offer *World in Action*, Rediffusion, *This Week*. Both at their best encourage the journalistic qualities attaching to the feature pages of a good popular newspaper. Neither pretends in twenty-six minutes to comprehensive coverage of complex major issues. If ITV is ever to offer, in spite of audience pressures, a current affairs programme that aspires to real authority we shall have to wait for programmes still in the development pipeline, or, further off still, for an extension of permitted broadcasting hours.

The peculiar flavour of the individual company's brand of current affairs is one of the strengths of Independent Television. And the customer, in future, is likely to be offered, particularly at the weekend, more variety still.

Meanwhile, ITN itself will, for the next few years at least, remain a separate entity within ITV; news and current affairs will continue separate and the commercial companies are unlikely, fitting individually as they do into the complex network jigsaw, to attempt a co-ordinated service of news and current affairs. That surely is what we expect of the BBC. Here no act of Parliament stands in the way. By a simple but drastic reorganisation, long-mooted, long-postponed, the BBC could attempt, uniquely of the world's broadcasting services, a grand double-barrelled assault on the journalistic targets most worth hitting, rapid response to the news and thorough analytical reporting.

Such a reorganisation is supposed to wait upon the closing down of the news studios at Alexandra Palace and the construction of new premises at the Television Centre. The BBC, short of funds, has had to postpone the capital expenditure required. ITV's *News at Ten* could hasten the project; it has already provoked a distinct hardening in the content of *24 Hours*. Alternatively, the BBC may decide that a short news-bulletin, a separate popular nightly magazine, and a weekly *Panorama* continue to meet all its obligations. What is clear now is that the BBC possesses the resources, properly deployed, to transform television journalism as we know it today, and give any newspaper in the land a run for its money.

Will it make the attempt? One would like to think so. In any event a principal consideration will be the constant current concern of BBC Television to win the battle for the audience.

"Hcag (*Tel*) opened the meeting by giving the comparative audience figures for the last quarter...." Naïvely—as I now realise—I could not at first believe my ears. To move to the BBC after seven years hard in commercial television and find that ratings came first on the agenda at the regular meetings of the Current Affairs Group; to hear individual current affairs programmes discussed weekly, irrespective of their merits, first and foremost in terms of the audience they achieved—was it for this I had crossed over to public service television? Oh! Pilkington, where was thy victory? Oh! Reith, where was thy sting?

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IN ITS EVIDENCE to the Pilkington Committee on Broadcasting, in a Memorandum on the "Consequences of Competition in Television" the BBC disdainfully claimed:

> ... the BBC believes that among the viewers who are able to receive both programmes it could regularly achieve an overall proportion of at least 50 per cent of the audience (instead of about 40 per cent as at present) simply by reducing the number of serious programmes during peak hours, in favour of lighter fare.

Today the BBC claims 50% of the audience. Then the public service washed whiter than white. Today, at peak time, the boast is that you can't tell margarine from butter. And, internally at any rate, the measuring stick of ratings is wielded everywhere with the undiscriminating enthusiasm of the recent convert.[6]

The BBC's altered attitude to ratings—never so far as I know publicly proclaimed or expounded—is clearly the result of a major policy decision. The BBC depends for its income on the licence fee we pay to use a television set or radio. In 1960 that licence was £4. Today in spite of vastly higher costs the licence is only £5. The BBC has adamantly set its face against advertising revenue, and insists on depending on government willingness to keep raising the licence fee as broadcasting costs continue to rise. No government (the argument runs) would be willing to mulct the citizen indefinitely for a network which commanded only a minority share of the audience. Hence the campaign to haul BBC-1 up, towards and, at times, over the magic barrier of 50%.

THE POLICY has succeeded. But the BBC's insistence to Pilkington that in spite of the pressures of competition "there is a marked difference in character between the BBC's service and that of its competitors" rings a little less convincingly today.[7] Certainly there is now little difference between the figures who command the two services. Michael Peacock who (as Controller—Channel 1) single-mindedly pushed the BBC up to the 50% mark, has been rewarded with the Managing Directorship of newly enfranchised London Weekend Television. Paul Fox, Peacock's aide as Head of the Current Affairs Group, and himself recently associated with an unsuccessful bid for a commercial contract, is the new Controller—Channel 1. And, to crown all, the militantly middlebrow figure of Lord Hill moves across from the ITA to become Chairman of the Board of Governors of the BBC.

The BBC offers its producers as creative an environment and as generous resources as any television organisation in the world. In very many fields it continues to make much of the world's best television. But for current affairs, in my view, recent developments bode ill.

Competition for an audience between two networks professing identical philosophies creates a climate in which television journalism will need —as Fred Friendly found at CBS—to stand up and fight for its existence. Television journalists will need a belief in themselves, and a clear vision of their aims and purposes.

IN THE END you cannot practise serious journalism either on television or in print if the prime consideration is the size of the audience. And a diet of appetisers is as unsatisfying to the cook as to the consumer.

Responsible journalism, as Walter Lippmann put it, has the duty to provide "an adequate supply of what the public will in the long run need to know." Television journalism has that duty too. In attempting to fulfil it we might yet make the not very surprising discovery that in twenty short years television journalism has far from exhausted the possibilities of the medium.

Jeremy Isaacs

[6] No ITV programme boss, in my experience, ever expected a current affairs programme to get a high rating. If it did they were inclined to measure the audience it inherited from the previous programmes, and to look quizzically at the strength of the opposition. *This Week*, 24 times in the Top Twenty in 1964, 44 times in 1965, was shown at that time against the BBC's least popular programmes of the week, achieving its highest ever audience, embarrassingly, against *The Magic Flute* (in German) and the Shakespearean *Age of Kings*.

[7] BBC-2 has of course made a considerable difference, though to a tiny audience. But here too the BBC, perhaps logically, seems likely to outflank Pilkington by offering a popular and a minority channel instead of the two comprehensive services once forecast.

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LETTERS

Lippmann, Buchan, Viet Nam

I HAVE JUST read Alastair Buchan's article on Viet Nam in the January ENCOUNTER. It is much the best thing that anyone has written about this hideous subject.

WALTER LIPPMANN

New York City

A Plague of Economists?

PROFESSOR POSTAN must have been affected by his loyalty to a faculty he so long adorned when he refused to draw the obvious conclusions from his own article [ENCOUNTER, January]. He gives a scarifying account of the follies of academic economists in respect of public policy in the last few years but goes on to talk of them in terms of the highest praise; indeed Professor Kaldor who is generally credited with being the brain behind *S.E.T.* is characterised as having qualities of "near genius." It is as though one said of some Harley Street oracle that his medical skill is superb—what a pity all his patients die!

After all there is so much evidence the other way. Not only has the present Cabinet which has brought us to the verge of disaster employed more professionally trained economists than any previous one, but there are also more economists in Whitehall than ever before. Nor does a wider view suggest that they should be absolved from blame. Historically, the record of economists since the discipline became a recognised one has been almost uniformly dismal. As Mrs. Woodham-Smith has shown in her book on the Irish famine in the 1840s, the reason why the catastrophe reached the dimensions it did was not hard-heartedness or incompetence in high places but a rigid fidelity to the teachings of the best economists of the day. In the present century, Keynes himself despite the genial insight he achieved into the nature of economic depressions and their possible cures was woefully at sea on many matters of the highest practical importance, particularly in the international field. All in all, he was probably never so harmlessly occupied as when pursuing his homosexual amours as so entertainingly presented by Mr. Michael Holroyd in his recent biography of Lytton Strachey.

Or take it from another point of view. Modern economics, to judge from one's colleagues' bookshelves, is almost exclusively an Anglo-American affair with some tributaries from the Danubian countries and Scandinavia. Germany, France, Italy, the Low Countries—all those lands whose growth rates we admire seem to do very well without contributing to economic theory, and by making sure that their economists are forced to undergo the serious disciplines of law and history. Is this a coincidence?

Professor Postan mentions the folly of development economists and the price that the poorer parts of the world have paid for their follies. He understates his case. I have heard economists at an Indian University (who, I am assured, are considered as technically proficient as any in the world) solemnly argue that India's federal structure, ethnic and linguistic diversity, caste and party conflicts, and administrative weaknesses are all equally irrelevant to her prospects of economic progress. They sit and juggle figures and graphs while the millions starve around them.

Finally Professor Postan falls back on the notion that even if the economics they profess is actually useless or harmful, economists in power can do good in other ways. "Such" he says, "is the nature of the subject and of the academic training it requires that it is difficult nowadays to be a good economist without also being an intelligent person." Observation teaches the contrary. No doubt the *I.Q.* of economists as of mathematicians and other dealers in the abstract must be high; but economic training in itself with its emphasis on abstractions and its tendency to make young people think that they can safely ignore the humdrum realities of ordinary life and the role of sentiment is in many cases positively harmful. On Professor Postan's own showing it teaches them to neglect the real causes of a society's successes and failures.

Of course this generalisation has its exceptions. Some economists are sensitive, thoughtful, and skilful human beings. Of course it is possible for an economist to be intelligent in the same way as it is possible for a "starlet" to be chaste. It is just very difficult.

MAX BELOFF

All Souls College,
Oxford

"The Steinerian Agony"

ANTHONY BURGESS in his review of George Steiner's *Language and Silence* [ENCOUNTER, December] makes certain statements which seem to me dangerously meaningless.

"To make one Jew, or Catholic, or Lutheran, or free-thinking intellectual, drown, flayed, in a bath of human ordure is as much a token of the existence of evil as the world needs. To repeat this act a million times adds to the sensationalism of the evil but not to its quantum, since evil, by its very nature, cannot be quantified. To wish to destroy a race or sect is strictly no more evil than to wish to destroy a single man or woman."

Two points need to be made here:

1. Mr. Burgess is allowing the word "evil" to control his expression when what he should be keeping in mind are atrocities committed in place and time. Who cares whether "evil . . . cannot be quantified"? One is appalled at the magnitude of the events, at the numbers killed, at the methods used; (numbers and methods impossible in Shakespeare's day since they required the techniques of a major industrial power). Presumably Mr. Burgess would consider it no more "evil," having desecrated the Sistine Chapel, to burn down the Uffizi, the Louvre and the National Gallery. You may choose whatever epithet you like but it seems foolish to

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allow the chosen word to hide the size and nature of events.

2. To alter the size of events is ultimately to alter their nature. To want to kill one particular Jew, or even a million Jews, is different in kind from wanting to exterminate a race. Genocide, by definition, must have different effects from mass-murder. (In the February 1967 ENCOUNTER Dr. Steiner said that the destruction of the Polish Jew meant the destruction of a special part of East European culture: "an absolute uniqueness passes ... a specific tradition of feeling, of linguistic practice ... irretrievably lost.")

When discussing complex issues writers must control words to prevent them from providing easily assimilable distortions. Is "to enjoy *Macbeth* ... pretty close to enjoying an apple"? Which?—a Cox's orange pippin or a baked cooker? I suppose it depends on the performance.

JOHN MORRIS

Brunel University,
London

Newspapers & Readers

A Self Defence — By CLIVE IRVING

A DEFECTOR to television, I am estranged from Fleet Street. The parting has left me not without a trace of guilt, as would the casting off from a mistress who had gone to seed. She sends her messages to me still, daily. There remains an emotional pull, some affection, and also some pity. The press is in a mess, and the debate in these pages between Christopher Driver, besotted with McLuhan, and John Beavan, his patient senior, displays some of the symptoms of this crisis. Where are they going? What are they for? Are newspapers necessary? I hesitated before joining the argument, because having turned my back on it all I thought it probably wiser to make my audio-tactile bed and lie on it. I appear, however, to have left a part of me behind, that part which Mr. Driver described, rather unfelicitously, as the new pornography. In defence of this I must speak.

The democratising process which has been influencing our newspapers during the last decade springs as much from economic reasons as from any intellectual emancipation. Still cursed with the labels of "popular" and "quality," the newspapers are, perhaps excessively class-conscious. Thus editors still talk in Christiansen terms about "the back streets of Derby" as a common denominator beyond which it is foolhardy to aspire; and advertising managers carry charts which stratify their readerships according to the awful *AB, C1, C2, D* and *E* income-group ratings, attempting to achieve the "mix" which best attracts advertising. The men who have the fate of newspapers marked on their slide rules, the advertising space buyers, are no longer the manufacturers of products, nor even the chief executives of the advertising agencies, but the media research and buying departments. If you want to find the principal economic impulse behind the growth of the "quality" papers these are the people to talk to. Ten years ago media buying was already a science, but nowhere near as sophisticated as it has since become. In the late 1950s the advertising boom which followed the end of newsprint rationing and the putative age of affluence pronounced by Mr. Macmillan poured its greatest riches into the two *Express* newspapers. They were distinguished not only by large aggregate circulations, but also by their significant percentage of readers in the *AB* category. (The *Daily Telegraph* had a far smaller circulation but a greater density of *AB* readers and was—as it still is—a "market" in its own right.) The *Express* papers were, however, an expensive and indiscriminate way of reaching *AB* readers if that was what the advertiser was mainly after. The media buyers began to seek more polarity in newspaper readership: at one end the highest concentration of *AB* readers without an outer ring of lower income groups, and at the other end the best "penetration" of an uncompromisingly mass market.

The shrewder newspapers saw the consequences of this polarity. At one end the *Sunday Times* has been the outstanding beneficiary, and at the other end the *Daily Mirror*. The *Express* papers, though both still with large circulations (and in the case of the *Sunday Express* still growing), have been caught between both extremes and therefore have had nothing like the percentage growth in advertising revenue which has enabled the *Sunday Times* to be the supermarket of the "quality" papers. As Mr. Aubrey Jones' astute analysis of Fleet Street economics[1] has pointed out, the "quality" papers get two-thirds of their revenue from advertising, while the *Mirror* gets two-thirds of its revenue from sales, leaving those in the middle with not enough from either at present price levels.

This economic background cannot be ignored in any explanation of the new balance between "popular" and "quality" papers, or as John Beavan optimistically called it, "the new London revolution." However visionary the editors who have pre-

CLIVE IRVING *was a managing editor of* The Sunday Times *and is now Head of Public Affairs for London Weekend Television Ltd.*

[1] National Board for Prices and Incomes Report No. 43, Cmnd. 3435.

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Edinburgh

RESEARCH *that could lead to computer machines with powers of intelligence, reasoning, and conversation is to be done at Edinburgh University by a team in the Department of Machine Intelligence and Perception.*

Professor Michie gave a progress report and he showed how a small computer in the Edinburgh laboratory was being taught to do simple juggling tricks such as balancing a pole that hovered backwards and forwards on a trolley.

The attempt to turn the computer into a conversationalist is aimed at bringing relatively cheap machines within easy reach of the classroom, library or science laboratory. A special language called POP *has been written as the first stage in this development. The language has been designed so that the man and the computer can progress steadily through a job by exchanging ideas.* THE TIMES

Peking

A REPORT *by the New China News Agency said that Chinese scientists, aided by the thought of Mao Tse-tung, had built a transistorised computer which could be used in the solution of problems arising in rocketry, as well as in nuclear research, space flight, and the like.*

Each time it was switched on, the computer first sang the song "The East Shines Red, The Sun Rises, There Emerges in China a Mao Tse-tung." At the same time, the computer drew a picture of Mao and wrote out, in facsimile of his handwriting, the slogan "Serve the People." It then proceeded to carry out "speedily and accurately" various complicated and intricate computer operations. THE GUARDIAN

London

ARRESTED *in Chelsea the other day, a Miss Susan Zeiger, known as "Suzy Creamcheese," described herself as a "professional demonstrator."*

Does this mean she is an employee of Rentacrowd, the giant organisation which supplies demonstrators for all occasions? Yesterday a spokesman at Crowd House, Rentacrowd's London headquarters, was dubious.

"Rentacrowd employees," he said, "are forbidden to identify themselves as such, or to describe themselves as demonstrators, professional or otherwise. In any case, with the increasing use of automation, most of our employees do not know their own names, if any, and would be unable, if arrested, to give even one name, let alone two.

"It seems likely that this Miss Zeiger, or Creamcheese, is one of a vociferous minority of freelance demonstrators who by their rejection of forward-looking techniques are holding up our massive drive for the co-ordination and rationalisation of Britain's unsurpassed demonstrational resources." DAILY TELEGRAPH

Liverpool

SOFIA SO GOOD: *Liverpool poet Brian Patten, on his way to Istanbul, was given a fish-eyed once-over by Bulgarian border officials and refused admission. He hopped off the train for a quick trim at the station barber's. Shorn and acceptable he was allowed to continue his journey.*
THE GUARDIAN

Milan

A TERRORIST ORGANISATION *formed by "a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist group," which intended to blow up American-occupied buildings has been broken up by the Milan police. Yesterday an explosive dump was found in a small tool-making workshop at Baggio, a suburb of Milan. It included sixty-one charges of dynamite, forty-two detonators, and other material.*

The organisation was said to be planning a number of terrorist attempts against American institutions in Milan, beginning with the United States Information Service library. A thick volume in which a niche had been made for a charge of explosive was found. It appeared that the group intended to leave the volume on a library shelf with a time bomb inside.
THE TIMES

Washington, D. C.

BLASPHEMY *with Nietzschean overtones, seen scrawled on a wall in the Hippie district of Georgetown: "God is over thirty."*
EVENING STANDARD

London

THERE IS LIKELY *to be a good deal of controversy over the publication in next month's* ENCOUNTER *of interviews with three young Russians, conducted in Moscow recently by John Morgan. The first question sets the tone: "What would happen if you were caught talking to us here?" Answer: "If they caught me in this car, then the least I could expect would be to get five years' imprisonment."*

Morgan filmed the interviews and excerpts were shown on Rediffusion's This Week *programme recently.* ENCOUNTER *obtained the complete transcripts of the interviews, which take up nearly eight pages of the February issue.*

On Monday [15 January] ENCOUNTER *received a telephone call from Rediffusion, who said that the Russian authorities were angry that the interviews had taken place. Rediffusion asked* ENCOUNTER *not to publish the full transcripts. There was even talk of a restraining order.* ENCOUNTER *replied that the magazine was already printed (it is on sale tomorrow).*

"We were astonished that the long arm of Russian censorship should try to extend into the British press and television," says Melvin J. Lasky, ENCOUNTER'S *joint editor.*
THE TIMES

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sided over this shift have been in anticipating changing tastes among readers, and particularly in reflecting the more sophisticated curiosity produced by the spread of university education and the educative power of television, they would not have the means to have met this demand without the fortuitously concomitant increase in funds from advertising. The growth of some of the "quality" papers seems now to have got into really high gear; 1967 was a year of staggering increase for the *Sunday Times*, going well beyond its management's expectations, and the day cannot be too far off when its sale reaches two million. *The Observer*, although well behind the *Sunday Times*, has passed through the critical zone which might have proved economically unviable, and is now out into the sunlit uplands. The *Sunday Telegraph* has failed to make any real progress, and its losses drain the profits of its prosperous daily companion.

Among the dailies, there will have to be one or two deaths or mergers, as a result of the new polarity. Between "pop" and "quality" there is a place for an expertly produced middle ground paper, which by natural elimination should be the *Express*, or an *Express-Mail*. But if the *Express* doesn't improve, that position could be seized by a *Mail-Sun* combination, because neither of these two papers has anywhere else to go but into the other's arms, and if such a merger was backed by technical innovation and qualitative advance the *Express* would really have something to fear. Old family ties might help such a marriage, but the present readerships of the *Sun* and the *Daily Mail* have less in common.

So much for the economics. How are the survivors going to justify newspapers as an instrument of modern communication? Mr. Driver is not alone in thinking that they should do more to complement television news, but I found his prescience on that point a contradiction of his gratuitous observations on what he called "the new pornography." One of the prime purposes of *Insight*, when we began it on the *Sunday Times*, was to re-examine the nature of news coverage at a time when it was obvious that television was preempting the "announcement" function, that it was robbing newspapers of their novelty value, at its simplest, listing the events. Our premise was that the value of the newspaper would now be determined primarily by the quality of its response to the basic event, rather than simply its ability to record it. I wouldn't claim that there was anything new in this. But early in 1963, when *Insight* was launched, it was still quite common for people to argue that Sunday newspapers depended largely on pseudo-events or features, since no real news occurred on Saturdays. The great fallacy of this seemed to me to be the assumption that a Sunday paper's news universe contained only Saturday. *Insight* at first took the week as its universe, concentrating on the many issues which the daily newspapers neglected in their headlong rush for the next twenty-four hours' novelties. We soon realised, though, that even a week was far too arbitrary, and we extended into contemporary history, which encompassed whatever time span the particular inquiry called for. The ultimate range of this approach was demonstrated by the Philby inquiry, where the team under Bruce Page found significant information buried away in the early 1930s. *Insight* does employ the chronological narrative method, and I assume that because of this, and the prospect it gives of reader-participation, this is what Mr. Driver means when he talks about "democracy adapted for masturbation." His phrase is arresting, his thinking muddled. The act of newspaper reading is naturally akin to that of the voyeur, whatever the technique of reporting which is employed. *Insight* was designed to inform rather than to titillate. It has also been argued that the wealth of detail which *Insight* employs is, in fact, a trivialising influence. It is perfectly true that detail for the sake of detail is a danger, though one which has always been recognised and guarded against. But the whole texture of this kind of reporting is different, and all those who have practised it can testify to the gruelling dependence on unadulterated fact which it imposes. This kind of reporting involves a distilling process of great intensity, with more information packed into one paragraph than is often evident in a whole column of "think-piece" writing. Mr. Driver is right in saying that *Insight* reporting has proved to be a compulsive attraction for readers. But it does not invest events with any more drama than is naturally inherent in them; in fact, in my own experience, the truth has quite often been even more dramatic than the laws of libel have allowed *Insight* to reveal.

I don't, however, wish to be too technical about this style of reporting. What must be said is that it is intended to be a strengthening of the armoury which newspapers can bring to bear in their constant struggle against the engulfing ambitions of the Executive. The patronage of power is as corrupting as ever, and there are too many examples of supine reporting for anyone to feel comfortable. Newspapers have not only to maintain their vigilance; they need to sharpen their instruments of inquiry against the increasingly skilful methods of news suppression and management which are now considered respectable among those who fear an informed democracy. They are still backward in recognising the importance of research, the kind of research which relies not on dog-eared envelopes of old cuttings, many of them perpetuating previous inaccuracies, but on the inspired scepticism which has always been the spring of stubborn journalism, and on the patience which ignores the slavery of topicality. The library and research resources in most national newspapers are inadequate to the task; they are mostly indiscriminate depositories of unchallenged ephemera. The next advance in the craft of journalism must lie in remedying this.

Meanwhile, too many editors are still working from the premise that television hardly matters as a news force. All I can say is, that looking from my new vantage point, Fleet Street seems introverted and parochial, archaic in some of its methods

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and many of its attitudes. Perhaps because it is much more dispersed as an industry, and also because it is much more catholic in its creative ingredients, television is far less sure of itself, more likely to innovate and much more prone to make mistakes, but is likely nevertheless to learn from them. The same cannot be said of Fleet Street. At least, not by me.

Questions about Viet Nam

By Brian Crozier

ALASTAIR BUCHAN'S article on Viet Nam in your January issue was the more disturbing for being both closely reasoned and basically sympathetic towards the Americans in their current dilemma. Wide though his range was, however, it seems to me that he overlooked some very important considerations. With his usual wit and percipience Robert Conquest (in his letter in your February issue) put his finger on one of the weaknesses of Mr. Buchan's argument—the near-certainty that "surrender involves worse moral and physical violence in the area." May I now point out some of the consequences of an American defeat in Viet Nam?

I should explain what I mean by "defeat." In this kind of war, defeat does not necessarily mean the destruction of the enemy's forces: the irrevocable frustration of his war aims defines defeat more accurately. Perhaps, in this context, North Viet Nam's war aims are more relevant than America's. In the first instance, North Viet Nam is fighting to gain control over the South; and in the second, to exercise some kind of hegemony over the remainder of France's former Indochina empire —Laos and Cambodia—and probably over part of Thailand as well.

Only the American presence in South Viet Nam and Thailand frustrates these domestic and irredentist ambitions. If Hanoi is enabled to pursue its aims unhindered by American power, then the United States will have been defeated. Such a situation is less likely to be achieved by purely military means than by negotiations. Indeed, the North Vietnamese communist Lao Dong party's specific instructions to its political arm in South Viet Nam, the National Liberation Front, are to combine negotiations, when the time is ripe, with heightened military activity, so that North Viet Nam's war aims may be achieved at the conference table. (Hanoi successfully used identical tactics during the two Geneva conferences—of 1954 and 1961–62—when large-scale military operations coincided with negotiations.)

Hanoi's current *military* strategy is utterly consistent with this analysis. It is enforced with fanatical efficiency by Le Duan, the most powerful member of the Lao Dong's Politburo, almost certainly against Soviet and even Chinese advice, and probably in the face of some opposition from his own immediate colleagues. It consists of continuing to send large fighting units to South Viet Nam. This serves several ends. It diverts America's attention and resources from the real war, which is the terrorist insurgency in the villages. It forces further escalation on the American side. This, in turn, involves President Johnson and his Administration in a rising spiral of expenditure and makes them increasingly vulnerable to the well-organised protest movement in the United States and elsewhere. In time, Hanoi's argument doubtless runs, the Americans will be forced to negotiate *on Hanoi's terms*, which imply America's defeat as I have defined it above.

NOW WHAT WOULD HAPPEN if Johnson yielded to the protesters—and to intelligent critics of Mr. Buchan's calibre? One does not have to subscribe to the "domino" theory in its primitive simplicity to see that neither Laos nor Cambodia would stand much chance of preserving its independence against a victorious Hanoi régime, which was already in control of the whole of Viet Nam. Already Laos is overrun at will by North Vietnamese troops and local satellite irregulars; and Cambodia is used as a military sanctuary by the Viet Cong. Neutralisation? Laos was "neutralised" in 1962, and much good it has done the Laotians. It cannot be said too often that neutralisation in the context of continental South-east Asia means nothing unless accompanied by the disarming of North Viet Nam. Who would do this, and who would supervise it if it were done?

Nor would the consequences stop there. Without even considering China, here are just a few:

1. A general loss of confidence in Washington's ability or will to honour commitments in the Pacific region, and well beyond.
2. The triumphant vindication of Chinese, Vietnamese, and Cuban theories of revolutionary war, encouraging emulation elsewhere and offsetting "Ché" Guevara's miserable failure in Bolivia.
3. The fostering of a neo-isolationist, "fortress America" mood in the United States.

In the closing passage of his article, Alastair Buchan shows awareness of point 3, but I think understates the gravity of it for the rest of the world. Yet the loss of credibility of governmental pronouncements from Washington, which he records, would become immeasurably greater if America reneged on its commitments (as this country, to its shame, seems bent on doing).

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ANOTHER IMPORTANT OMISSION on Mr. Buchan's part —partly made up for in his letter of "Afterthoughts" [ENCOUNTER, February]—was "Thailand, which is increasingly important in the Viet Nam situation. Itself a victim of subversive violence in the north-east, partly from terrorists trained in North Viet Nam, it now has half-a-dozen American air bases, from which *most* of the bombing raids on North Viet Nam and along the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos are staged. In addition, some 15,000 Thai troops are fighting in South Viet Nam. Clearly, an American defeat in Viet Nam would be followed by a vast increase in subversion in Thailand. Should the Americans, then, concede defeat in Thailand as well as Viet Nam?

The huge American military investment in Thailand makes sense, indeed, only on the assumption that the Americans are in continental South-east Asia to stay. This alone encourages the hope that they will not yield in Viet Nam.

Having said all this, it does not follow that the present policy of continuous bombing is the best or the only way to win. But to look at this as well would take more of ENCOUNTER's space than I feel I can take, at the end of this long letter.

"Lucy"

WORDS TWIST and slither in the hands of propaganda-merchants, ironists and even creative artists. Whatever the Beatles themselves intended or modish sociologists propose, "Lucy," as it stands, is a marvellously surrealist fantasy and it is both absurd and dangerous to limit its relevance [Peter Fryer, "A Map of the Underground," ENCOUNTER, October 1967] to the now fashionable—though medically unrecommended—addiction to drugs. "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" could more cogently be argued to refer to the impending glories of devaluation. (Perhaps "I'm dreaming of a White Christmas" is the secret love-song of a coprophile.) "To turn on" has long been used as a metaphor for "to arouse sexual desire in," and "I get by" or "high with a little help from my friends" could apply to any of our normal consolations when lonely—masturbation, alcohol, or cigarettes.

HARRY GUEST

Tokyo

B. Traven

READERS of *R*'s timely comments on "the man nobody knows" [ENCOUNTER, November] may be interested to know that we are planning to re-issue three of B. Traven's best-known novels, *The Bridge in the Jungle*, *The Carreta*, and *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, in the autumn.

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AUTHORS

Ignazio Silone has published revised editions of both his novel *Bread and Wine* and his study of totalitarianism, *The School for Dictators* (both re-issued by Gollancz)....

Freya Stark's new book of essays *The Zodiac Arch*, to be published by John Murray this spring, will include "Lunch with Homer." Among her recent books are *Dust in the Lion's Paw* (1961) and *Rome on the Euphrates* (1966)....

Slawomir Mrozek's first collection of stories, *The Elephant*, appeared in 1962. Macdonald will be publishing a second volume, *The Ugupu Bird*, this month (translations from the Polish by Konrad Syrop)....

John Kenneth Galbraith's books include *The Affluent Society*, *American Capitalism*, and *The Liberal Hour*, all published by Hamish Hamilton and in paperback by Penguin. His article will appear as the introduction to a new edition of James Mill's *History of British India* (four volumes) to be published this year by Chelsea House Publishers (New York)....

Horace Judson is a London correspondent of the *Time-Life News Service*....

J. W. Lambert is Literary Editor of the *Sunday Times* in London. He contributed an article, "The Folly of Censorship," to the July 1967 ENCOUNTER....

Martin Esslin is Head of Drama (Sound) at the B.B.C. His books include *Brecht: A Choice of Evils* (1959) and *The Theatre of the Absurd* (1962), both published by Eyre & Spottiswoode....

Goronwy Rees' autobiographical collection of essays, *A Bundle of Sensations*, was published by Chatto & Windus in 1960....

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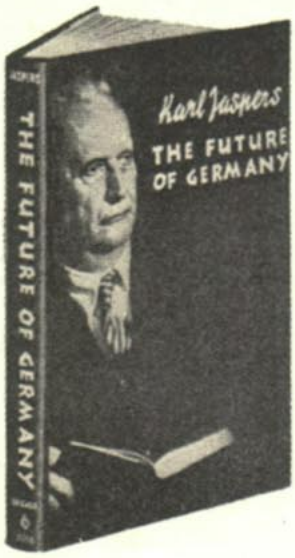

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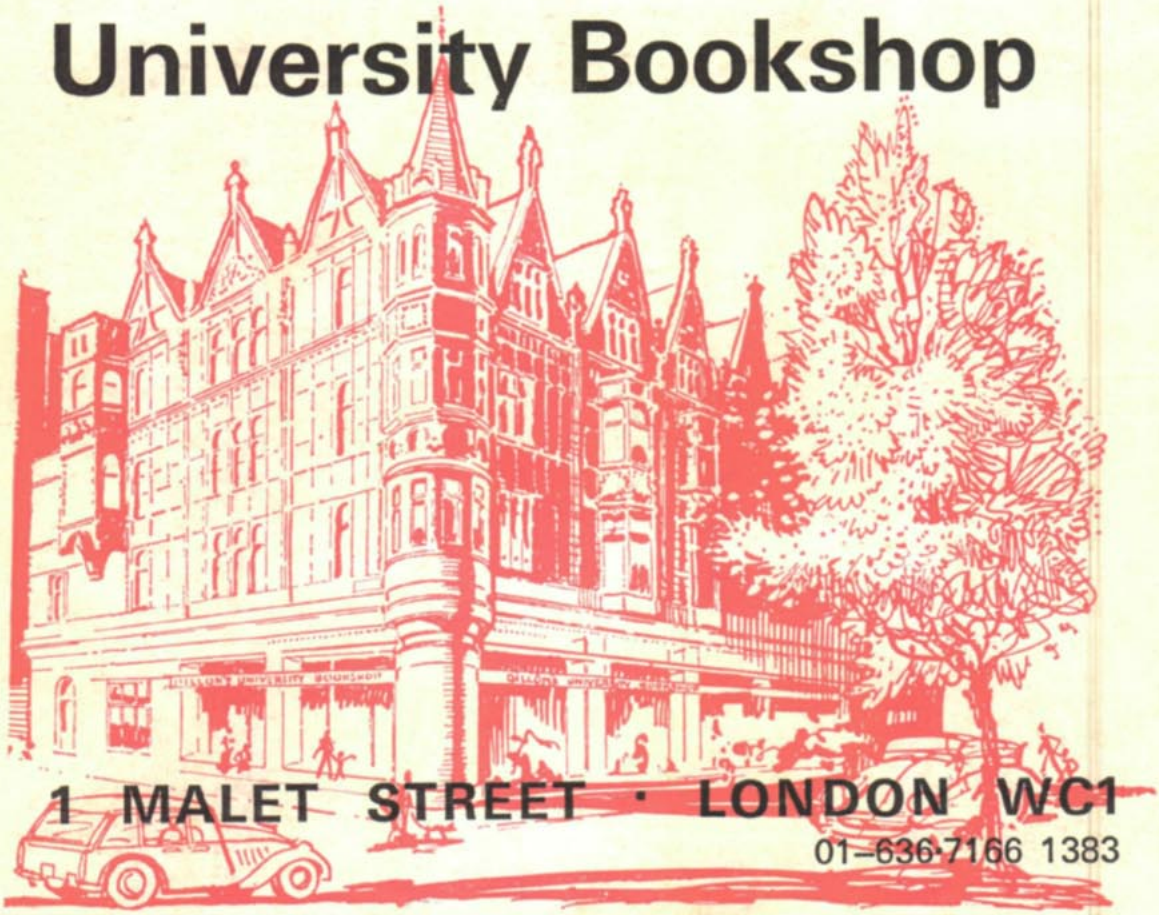

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